MILESTONES

By Wm. F. ROBISON, S. J.

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MILESTONES
ON THE
WAY TO LIFE

BY
WILLIAM F. ROBISON, S.J., PH.D.
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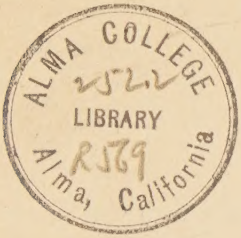

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TO
MY "ALMA MATER"
ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY

FOREWORD

This is another C. C. C. volume; for, like its predecessors, its subject matter originally formed the substance of discourses or conferences delivered in St. Francis Xavier ("College") Church, and therefore it belongs to the series of "College" Church Conferences. Like its predecessors, too, this work is presented not as a compilation of lectures, but as a useful treatise upon a very important subject.

Preceding volumes have dealt with the Catholic Church, with its Author, and with the foundations upon which it rests, as also upon the sacramental streams of grace which it holds within itself for the weal of mankind.

It is by the Sacraments that the Church brings men to "life" and to the fuller possession of this divine gift. Still, save in the case of infants, who by reason of their

condition are incapable of any preparation for this sublime guerdon of divine life, there must be a preparation for this magnificent gift. This preparation may be considered under a twofold aspect, individual and general.

In ways manifold and mysterious does God draw to Himself and to His truth and His love the souls of men who have not as yet found the true way home. These ways are as diverse as the whisperings of the Holy Spirit Himself—and as unsearchable. Into this personal and individual preparation for God's fuller gift we do not inquire. But, there is a general process of God's Providence, the elements of which are discernible in the adorable variety of His dealings with individual souls; and the steps of this Providence can be traced in the pathway by which He leads adults to Himself. There are, in fact, fixed "Milestones on the Way to Life," and these it is the purpose of the present work to study. We shall study them under the guidance of the Church, which is "Christ's Masterpiece," given to us by God through "His Only Son" and un-

shakable as the "The Bedrock of Belief."[1]

It is hardly necessary to state that the following pages are intended first and foremost for the children of the Church, who are the beneficiaries of the sacred sacramental system which holds the fruits of Christ's redemption. Yet, their loving ambition is to be of help also to others who are not of the fold, so that they too may come to the One Shepherd.

Here, as in previous volumes, no claim is made to any special novelty either of thought or of treatment. Truth with clearness and clearness with truth—these have been the target aimed at, with the hope of bringing "men, my brothers," nearer to our Father in heaven.

Due acknowledgment is hereby made to standard theological works.

WILLIAM F. ROBISON, S. J., PH. D.
St. Louis University,
Easter, 1923.

[1] Titles of other works by the author.

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MILESTONES ON THE WAY TO LIFE

CHAPTER I

ABRAHAM—FAITH

Life of soul, object of Christ's mission. Sanctifying grace is this life. It means salvation and holiness: its nature: its effects.—Grace normally comes through Sacraments. Preparation needed in adults. Outline of preparation found in Council of Trent: these dispositions the subject of present work, with types from Old Testament.—Abraham the type of faith. His history.—Faith's place in justification. Error of unbelievers; of Protestants.—Nature of faith. False position of so-called Reformers; of Modernists.—Application: living faith; patience; peace; purity; charity.

When the Son of God became the Son of Man; when "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us";[1] when He stooped down to the lowliness of our humanity and took upon Himself the burden of our sorrows

[1] John i, 14.

and of our sinfulness, the great object which was before Him, as He sought to do the will of the Father, was this—that He might bring His loved ones to the true life. "I am come," He said, "that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly," [1] life eternal in the heavenly mansions of the Father's house, and life, true and divine, even here below through the mysterious and overwhelming gift of sanctifying grace.

We shall begin to appreciate the value of this sanctifying grace, if we recall to our minds the fact that it means salvation and holiness. Yes, it means salvation. Great indeed is the worth of a human soul and great too is its natural beauty. But, when to that soul is added sanctifying grace, its heightened beauty transcends the splendor of the whole material universe, by as much as the shining of the summer sun outgleams the feeble glimmering of a glow-worm. With grace the soul is the royal one by the side of the King, the glorious one of whom the Psalmist said: "The queen stood on

[1] John x, 10.

thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety."[1] Moreover, since the elevation of man to the supernatural destiny of the blessed vision of God, the absence of sanctifying grace from the soul means not only the lack of the patent of nobility, but the presence of sin, that monstrous evil which destroys from before the face of God. Yes, grace means salvation, and that means our all. With grace we are saved; without it we are lost.

It means holiness too: it is godliness, because it is God-likeness. It is sanctifying grace which makes men Christ-like. In the Redeemer of mankind the root of all His greatness, as of all His sanctity, was the Hypostatic Union, that union of the human nature with the divine in the Person of the Word. This substantial or personal union it was which made Christ the Man the natural Son of God. This union it was which made each of the human acts of Christ of infinite value and merit. And it is this union which is shadowed forth, though ever so feebly, by our own union with God

[1] Ps. xliv, 10.

through sanctifying grace. And as the hypostatic union gave to Christ's actions their infinite value, so grace is the dignifying principle of our lives. It is the vivifying principle in the order of the divine. Just as, in the natural order, the soul is the principle of all natural life, the source of all the higher faculties, the font of all vital activities; so, too, in the supernatural plane, sanctifying grace is the soul of all. It makes us *live;* it makes our good works worthy of the sight of God, worthy of the recompense which they so completely merit, worthy of the eternal diadem of glory which will one day crown them.

This sanctifying grace, which is truly life, is a supernatural gift of God, more precious than anything which the material world holds in its wealth of gold and silver and pearls and diamonds and other gems. It is a very real, though a very mysterious, thing; it is a physical reality, infused by God into the soul—and it produces results commensurate with its divine sacredness.

It makes us partakers of the divine nature and founds the equality which is nec-

essary for the love of friendship. It is not merely as the creatures of His hands that God loves us; it is not only as a mighty sovereign might love the greatest of his subjects. He would love us as a friend loves a friend or as a lover cherishes his beloved. Now, a certain equality is necessary to change patronage or condescension into the love of friendship; and it is by sanctifying grace that God has made us as much His equals as even He could make us. As St. Peter says in words inspired from on high, "He hath given us most great and precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." [1]

We do not participate in the perfections of God which are incommunicable, such as His infinity and His omnipotence; for we remain human beings, and God is ever God. Yet we are likened unto God by a participation that is very real. By the presence of grace the soul is born again and lives with the life of God. It is likened unto Him in holiness; for, as God by His infinite holiness turns to acts that bear the stamp of im-

[1] II Peter i, 4.

measurable sanctity, so by grace the soul has the fundamental power of acts which make for the greater and greater uplifting of the friend of God. The soul through grace is likened unto God in that supreme quality of knowledge which is proper to Him; for, according to the Fathers of the Church, grace is the seed of glory and differs only in degree from that glory in which we shall see our God face to face in the immediate and unveiled vision of the Godhead. Even now we have by grace the root of the power of thus looking on our God in the vision which means heaven. Though this power is now undeveloped, the day will come, if we guard this grace, when the root will grow into the fruit, when the bud of grace will blossom forth into the flower of glory, and in full reality "we shall be like Him" more and more, "because we shall see Him as He is." [1]

This partaking of God's nature goes on to our adoption as His children, an adoption which really and internally changes us from

[1] John iii, 2.

sinners to saints, from objects of God's wrath to the children of His love. Yes, unspeakable as is the privilege, by sanctifying grace we are made the sons of God. "He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love."[1] "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God. . . . Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God."[2] St. Paul exults in the same glorious truth and draws its equally glorious conclusion, when he says: "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."[3]

This sanctifying grace, then, is the life to which we must tend, if we have it not, and which we should guard as the pearl of great price, if we are so blessed as to possess it.

[1] Coloss. i, 13.
[2] I John iii, 1, 2.
[3] Rom. viii, 16, 17.

Yet, in God's sweet Providence there is a preparation which normally goes before the attaining of this life divine.

The chief channels of this sanctifying grace are the Sacraments, and, first of all, Baptism. These Sacraments our Blessed Lord left in the keeping of His Church to apply to the souls of men the fruits of His redemption, to guard His dear ones from the cradle to the grave, and to help them in every phase of their lives. Yet for these Sacraments, and, in the first instance, for the one which opens the way to the rest, Baptism, one must prepare himself, if he is capable of so doing.

This preparation it shall be our endeavor to study. Under the guidance of Mother Church we shall follow along the pathway where stand the "Milestones on the Way to Life." And all through our study we shall try to take to heart the lessons which are vouchsafed us; we shall strive for a deeper appreciation of the things that lead to holiness; and thus we shall establish more firmly within our souls the sacredness of the sovereign sway of God.

We need not dwell upon the preparation for justification in the case of infants. Such as these are incapable of any preparation whatsoever. So, through the great love of God they receive the heavenly glory of grace and of consequent godliness without any preparation at all; and in unconscious babyhood they are made the children of God, as the waters of Baptism wash them from defilement and incorporate them into the mystic Christ. It was thus, without any preparation, that God's grace first came to most of us.

Passing by the case of infants, then, we shall ponder deeply on the preparation for justification in the case of adults who come to God for the first time or who return to Him after wilfully forfeiting *all* supernatural excellence. Before such as these are finally blessed with the pearl of great price, they are prepared and disposed for the gift of God. The benison of grace is, indeed, gratuitous and flows forth from the bounty of God without any real meriting right on the part of the recipients. Yet, these recipients have a part, too. God's

heavenly assistance calls them and aids them onward to life; but they must freely assent to this heavenly lure and must co-operate with its sacred promptings. They are not dragooned into salvation; they are not coerced into sanctity; they are not driven or dragged into holiness.

The Council of Trent gives a most illuminating declaration of the process of preparation whereby adults are brought to justification. This declaration will form the basis of considerations most profitable to us for the conduct of our lives, inasmuch as the same dispositions that make for the first coming of sanctifying grace to the soul of man tend to the safeguarding and the increase of this same heavenly life within the hearts of God's children.

In its sixth session the Sacred Synod says: "They (sinners) are disposed for justice, when, aroused and helped by divine grace, they conceive faith from hearing and are freely moved towards God, believing to be true what He has revealed and promised, and above all that the wicked is justified by God through His grace 'by the redemption

which is in Christ Jesus'; and when, understanding themselves to be sinners, from the fear of divine justice by which to their profit they are overwhelmed, they turn to the consideration of God's mercy and are lifted up to hope, trusting that because of Christ God will be propitious to them; and when they begin to love Him as the fountain of all justice and, in consequence, are moved against their sins by a certain hatred and detestation, that is, by that penance which must be done before baptism; in fine, when they propose to receive baptism, to begin a new life, and to keep the divine commandments. . . . Upon this disposition and preparation follows justification itself, which consists in the remission of sins and the sanctification and renovation of the interior man." [1]

So, the stages are these: faith; repentance, which flows from the holy fear of God, from hope in His mercy, and from at least the beginning of love for Him. These are the Milestones on the Way to Life.

Our purpose, then, is to consider each of

[1] Sess. vi, cc. 6, 7.—Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, nn. 798, 799.

these dispositions, and to consider them not merely in so far as they are a preparation for holiness, but in so far as they are also the qualities which should forever have part in the lives of the children of God. Furthermore, in order to bring these dispositions home to ourselves in a more concrete manner, it will be well to see them exemplified in living models; and these models we shall look for and find in the old dispensation of God, which was itself a preparation for His more blessed economy in the law of love.

The Old Testament had a value of its own, great and sublime; but it was also a figure of what was to be and a type of the future more abundant outpouring of God's bounty. Too much is it forgotten. Too much is it slighted. Hence, our consideration of types from the Old Testament will aid us in appreciating its value and in realizing better the love of God, which has ever brooded over the race of men, but which was reserving its sweetest manifestations for us, who are the objects of special predilection.

The first of the dispositions for justifi-

cation and sanctification is faith, and Abraham, the father of believers, is its type. Let us begin with this.

The Apostle St. Paul tells us that we are justified by faith, and gratuitously.[1] And the meaning of his words is that faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and root of all justification; without it it is impossible to please God or to come to union with Him. Necessary as faith is, our justification is nevertheless the free gift of God; for, none of those things which precede justification, whether faith or works, can strictly and as of real right merit the grace of sanctification. These truths it will be sufficient to have mentioned for the present. We shall come back to them later. Now let us occupy ourselves with looking at the type of faith.

St. Paul says: "It is written: Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice. Know ye therefore that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith, told

[1] Rom. iii, 22, 24. Cf. Denz. n. 801.

unto Abraham before: In thee shall all nations be blessed. Therefore they that are of faith, shall be blessed with the faithful of Abraham."[1]

The faithful Abraham! Truly, he was faithful; truly, he was the chosen of God. He was the son of Thare, of the land of Ur of the Chaldees, and the favor of God marked him out for His sublime designs; for, God had not forgotten the wayward children of His love. Wayward, indeed, they were, and by their crimes had forced God to turn His heart away from them. From the days when the waters of the deluge had wrought God's angry vengeance upon a debauched humanity, the race had been growing again and filling the old earth. But men had not learned the lesson which God in His righteous wrath had taught. Once more they had taken to fleshly ways; their ideas of the sovereign Lord were debased; and forever and ever they were falling away into the folly of polytheism.

Under the shadow of the trees of Paradise

[1] Gal. iii, 6-9.

God had spoken to the forebears of the race and had promised them a Redeemer in their sorrow and abandonment.[1] But the pledge of God had almost been forgotten by men. In order that all men might not grovel in the grossness of the worship of many gods and lose the memory of Him "who was to be sent,"[2] the Lord would entrust the true worship of the true God and the safeguarding of the promise of a Redeemer to a chosen people. And Abraham would be their father.

"And the Lord said to Abraham: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land that I shall show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed . . . and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."[3] So, at the age of seventy-five years Abraham left Haran, where he had made his abode; and with Sara his wife, with Lot his nephew, and with his family and his flocks he went

[1] Cf. Gen. iii, 15.
[2] Cf. Gen. xlix, 10.
[3] Gen. xii, 1-3.

out into the land of Chanaan. Later on, before the gaunt spectre of famine, he went down into Egypt. Back again into Palestine he came; and there, in order that peace might be preserved, he separated from Lot and dwelt in Chanaan between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. Here, after rescuing Lot from the power of the Elamites, Abraham was met by the king of Salem and priest of the Most High, Melchisedech, who offered up bread and wine in sacrifice to the Lord and blessed the conquering patriarch.

In his fear and apprehension before the probable attacks of his enemies, Abraham was reassured by the word of the Lord, who said: "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great."[1] And fear fled away. But the heart of man was heavy within his breast, as he thought of the lack of a child to be his heir and to carry on his line. His servants would have all his substance—and he would not know the solace of a child of his own. And his sorrow found voice in humble reproach to

[1] Gen. xv, 1.

the loving Lord. But the Lord "brought him forth abroad and said to him: Look up to heaven and number the stars, if thou canst. . . . So shall thy seed be. *Abraham believed and it was reputed to him unto justice.*" [1] There was his staunch faith in the word of God.

Yet, that faith was to be tried. Years passed; and Sara was without child; for the Lord had not blessed her. When Abraham was ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared to him in a vision and renewed His covenant with him. To recall His promise of His servant's numberless progeny, God changed the name of that servant from Abram, "noble, elevated father," to Abraham, "father of the multitude." [2] Not through Ismael, the son of the Egyptian handmaid, Agar, but through Isaac, the son of Sara, was the promise of the Lord to be fulfilled. "And God said to Abraham: Sara thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for a perpetual cove-

[1] Gen. xv, 5, 6.
[2] Cf. Gen. xvii, 5.

nant, and with his seed after him."[1] "And the Lord visited Sara, as he had promised; and fulfilled what he had spoken. And she conceived and bore a son in her old age. . . . And Abraham called the name of his son, whom Sara bore him, Isaac."[2] The child grew to boyhood and to manhood; and the heart of Abraham rejoiced in his well-beloved.

Yes, Abraham believed. But his faith was now subjected to a fearful trial; for, the Most High ordered him to take his son and offer him in sacrifice in the place that would be shown him.[3] Surprise and wonder, yes, and deep and bitter grief rushed in upon the heart of the servant of God. Sacrifice his son! But, God was the Master of life and death; what He had given He might also take away. And as for God's promise? Abraham believed. In some way God would redeem His word, whereby He had pledged Himself that through Isaac Abraham would be the father of many nations. Yes, He would redeem it, even though it were to

[1] Gen. xvii, 19.
[2] Gen. xxii, 1-3.
[3] Cf. Gen. xxii.

mean that the Lord of life must raise the slain from death to life.

Abraham believed. And rising in the night, he took two servants and Isaac, his son. He cut the wood of the sacrifice, and started forth upon the three days' journey to Mount Moriah. In sight of the mountain, the servants were left behind. Onward went the father and the son, the latter bearing the wood for the holocaust, the former carrying fire and a sword. And "Isaac said to his father: My father. And he answered: What wilt thou, son? Behold, saith he, fire and wood: where is the victim for the holocaust? And Abraham said: God will provide himself a victim for the holocaust, my son."[1]

Oh, that father's heart! The victim? His boy—for, though grown to manhood, the child of his love was still his boy—his boy was to be the victim. But he could not tell him yet. "So they went on together."[2] At last the spot was reached; and then Abraham told his son that *he* was to be the

[1] Vv. 7, 8.
[2] V. 8.

victim, since such was the will of God. A hush; a prayer: and Isaac was ready to do his part. One last, long look around—and he was bound and laid upon the altar.

That poor father's aching, bleeding heart! What though the skies were bright? What though the sun shone down upon a land that was fair to see? Within his soul all was dark and bleak, swept by the blasts of sorrow. "And he put forth his hand and took the sword, to sacrifice his son."[1] That sword had not yet touched his boy—it was never to do that; but its point had cut down into the bleeding depths of Abraham's loving heart. But, Abraham believed—and he raised the sword to deal the death blow. And lo! the angel of the Lord stayed his hand, and the word of the Lord bade him spare his son. "Now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake. . . . By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed

[1] V. 10.

as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore. . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. Abraham returned . . . and they went to Bersabee together, and he dwelt there." [1]

Yes, without doubt, Abraham believed. There is the model of faith, so much praised by the inspired writers of the New Testament of love. There is the example of the father of all believers.

The part in justification and sanctification that belongs to faith is of supreme importance; the truth as to its function in this regard arouses the violent opposition of many adversaries of the Christian verity. St. Paul tells us that "Abraham believed, and it was reputed to him unto justice." [2] He tells us too that "without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him." [3] And the Church, guarding the revelation of God, has always taught, as she teaches to-day, that

[1] Vv. 12, 16-19.
[2] Rom. iv, 3.
[3] Heb. xi, 6.

faith is the beginning, the foundation and the root of all justification.[1]

This doctrine of Mother Church is particularly exasperating to unbelievers and to the self-satisfied indifferentists of to-day. These cry out, with a fine assumption of assurance and of full knowledge of the whole economy of God's ways with man, that it makes no difference whether a man believes or what he believes, if only he is a good man. Now, there might be something in their claim, were it possible for one voluntarily to reject faith and still to be a good man. But, he cannot disdain the rights of the sovereign God, and still lay claims to moral goodness.

"It matters not whether a man believes or what he believes, if only he is a good man"! A good man! If only, I suppose, he pays his debts and wrongs no man and is a careful provider for home and family and is not a sodden drunkard or a debauched roué! Truly, we find no fault with such a man for what he does, but for what he leaves undone. For his deeds of justice to men we praise him; but for his injustice to God we blame

[1] Cf. Denz. n. 801.

him. For his regard for his wife and family, for his kindness to the poor, for his respect for clean living we esteem him and we bless him; but for his disregard for the claims of God we censure him. To say that it matters not whether a man believes or not, is to say that a man may with impunity call the great God a trifler or a liar, and that he may without guilt refuse to fulfill towards his Maker his strictest obligations. If a man deprive his fellowmen of property or of life, men call him a thief or a murderer; but if a man refuse to recognize God's rights to the service of mind, as well as of hand, men call him "a good man," provided he does not trample under foot the conventionalities of polite society! It is Pharisaism, pure and simple. For, to refuse to bow down the intellect in the assent of faith, when the revelation of God stands sufficiently clear before one, is a crime against heaven. To withhold the assent of faith may, it is true, be altogether guiltless. It is thus guiltless (and then only) when the fact that God has actually spoken is not yet patent. Still, even in this contingency,

man's attitude of soul must not be one of indifference, and much less one of hostility, if he would be free from guilt.

For, in view of the Eternal One's provision of leading men to Himself by means of this visible creation, a man cannot for a long time remain in innocent ignorance of the God who made him. Unless he is sinfully unfaithful to the light of reason and to the proofs which lie about him in the world at large, he must come to the knowledge of a personal God. And when a man admits the existence of a personal God, and, as a consequence, the possibility of a divine revelation, his disposition of mind and heart towards this Sovereign of his may not lawfully be one of disdain or of irresponsibility. There is the soundest reasonableness in his entertaining a positive readiness and willingness, not to say an eager desire, to hearken if and when that Supreme Master deigns to speak to His creature. Nay, even when the actual fact of divine revelation is not yet established with moral certainty to the mind of man, if he has so much as a prudent doubt as to whether God

may have spoken, he lies under the imperative duty of making an honest inquiry. Otherwise he is guilty of sin against God. Only so long as a man does not see that God has actually made His revelation can the refusal to investigate and the withholding of the submission of faith be without the stain of disloyalty to God. And even if, for the reason assigned, it be guiltless, it is a sad and pitiable misfortune because of the lamentable privation of heavenly goods which it entails.

The unbelievers and indifferentists say with virtuous indignation, that, in holding to this doctrine of the necessity of faith for the salvation of men, we are damning those who do not think as we do; that we are intolerant, and deserve to meet with the intolerance which in their outraged fairness of mind they proceed to mete out to us; that we are demanding the impossible, inasmuch as we require faith from those who cannot possibly have that faith, having never heard of the revelation of God.

Truly, a brave show of objection! and so unselfish and disinterested! But, the fact of

the matter is, that we are not creating by our imagination some fantastic fiction and making it necessary for salvation by our own unauthorized dictum; we are only holding to the revelation of God Almighty, who has Himself placed faith as the foundation of all union with our God. We are not condemning any man; we are only proclaiming the condition fixed by God as necessary for our coming home. We are not demanding the impossible from any one; but are only asserting the need of what, by the Providence of God, will be within the reach of all who do what lies in their power, since God gives to all adults the graces necessary to come to the knowledge of the truth and to the attainment of salvation.

The Council of the Vatican lays before us God's plan with respect to man and shows us its justification.[1] God is our Creator and the Lord of heaven and earth. He guards and governs His creation by His sweet Providence. From created things we can mount up and come to the certain and sure knowledge of our God. Yet, it has pleased

[1] Cf. Denz. n. 1785 ff.

Him in His wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and His eternal decrees by a supernatural manifestation. Had God left man in the "state of nature," which as a matter of fact never existed, He would have supplied him with such means as would have enabled him to lead a moral and religious life in accordance with his nature. But, in ineffable love, God has raised man to the divine order, and He governs him according to a supernatural Providence. In this order and under this Providence it is by His revelation and His grace that God furnishes man with the means to lead a life supernatural and divine and to arrive at a destiny which is far above the reach of mere nature. From the fact of this revelation from God flows the necessity of faith on the part of man.[1]

Only in the darkness of pride and of foolish self-sufficiency can man lay claim to autonomy and to independence of reason and of will. When God speaks, the very condition of our dependence as creatures establishes the necessity of believing what

[1] Cf. Denz. n. 1789. ff.

our God has said; and not to do so is to offer Him the outrageous insult that He is either ignorant or a liar—and to do either is to deny His infinite excellence and His very existence. Faith is a homage of total submission to God—and it is so presented to us by the Council; it is a submission of intellect and will, a submission required by our dependence upon our Maker. It is, therefore, an obligation, a solemn duty. But it is more than that. It is an incomparable benefit; it is an indispensable help to realize our lofty destiny of sublime nobility. For, this destiny can be reached only when we tend towards our supernatural end as free and reasonable beings who know whither they are going and who freely will that which they do. And thus it is that without faith it is impossible to please God or to come to salvation. Faith is a part of justification.

From the doctrine of works without faith, so dear to the unbelievers and indifferentists of the world, the pendulum of error swings to the other extreme, which glorifies faith without works and makes faith the whole of justification. But, faith is not the whole of

justification: one is not justified by faith alone, as the old Protestantism of Luther and the so-called Reformers maintained.

The whole of their false system was based on the erroneous foundation of the absolute and irremediable evil of poor, fallen human nature. For them the darkness must always remain as black as Stygian night, and it can never be illuminated even by the light of the sun of justice: man's works are always sins, meriting the hatred of an all-pure God: free will has been extinguished in the fall of Adam, and is now only a fiction introduced into the Church by the devil himself: God does everything in man, his evil deeds as well as the good (though none are truly good), and this really and directly, in such sort that the treason of Judas is not less the work of God than is the loyal conversion of Paul.[1]

Horrible statements these, are they not? Yet, they are the doctrines of old Protestantism as to the way in which man is brought to salvation through justification. For, according to their principles, justification is not a remaking of man; it is not a re-

[1] Cf. Denz. nn. 771, 775, 776, 814-817.

birth; it is not a tranformation of his nature. It can be nothing more than a voluntary illusion on the part of God, who wishes to see Jacob in Esau and to bless him; who chooses to behold us clad in the merits of Jesus Christ, to forget, so to speak, that beneath this vestment there is nothing but defilement, and to declare us just and to treat us as holy, though we remain forever unchanged sinners.[1] We have no part in the entire work; we do nothing but take this mantle of Christ to cover our vileness; we hide behind Christ—and we do it by faith. And thus, according to them, faith is the whole of justification. Not only is faith not an unnecessary thing, as the unbelievers and indifferentists maintain; but it is everything. Nothing else is needed, neither grace nor works nor morality.

That is their teaching. It is not the teaching of God. It is only the result of the intellectual wanderings of pride-guided mortals. According to God's truth, revealed to men, justification is a rebirth, a transformation of the soul by sanctifying

[1] Cf. *Dictionnaire Apologétique*, s. v. "Foi" p. 39.

grace, which makes us partakers of the divine nature, heirs of God and coheirs with Jesus Christ. The sinner can and must dispose himself for this justification, not indeed without the grace of God, but by cooperating with this help divine.

In this preparation faith has a great part—the first place, as constituting man in the supernatural world, where the soul turns to God in honest repentance, which arises from the fear of God's judgments, from hope in His mercy, and from at least the beginning of love. Faith is, beyond all doubt, a necessary disposition; but it is not sufficient in itself. For, if it is not accompanied by works and vivified by charity, it is nothing more than a dead faith—and such does not avail unto sanctification.

The faith without works, the faith which would justify of itself, is known neither to Scripture nor to Christian tradition. What, in truth, is the preaching of the Baptist, of Christ Himself, and of the Savior's Apostles, if not a call to penance, as a preparation for the Kingdom of God? What is it but an appeal to men to believe, indeed, but

then to die with Christ to the works of the flesh in order to live the works of the spirit, like Christ and with Christ? Undoubtedly, the gospel of Christ demands faith in the truths revealed; but it equally demands lives conformable to these truths. And it is only by arbitrarily cutting certain texts, by separating them violently from their context, and by piecing them together in order to give some appearance of cohesion, that the authors and adherents of false systems have elaborated their doctrines. Once more, faith is necessary for justification and for salvation; but it is not sufficient of itself to effect the sanctification of the soul. It opens the door which leads to our Father's home; but it does not take us through that door and bring us close to the great heart of the Lover of mankind.

Not only with regard to the part played by faith in the justification of man have errors wrought their evil effect, but with reference to its very nature as well. Luther's false doctrine about the effect of faith is accompanied, to say the least, with a distorted notion about its very nature. For him, in

spite of the relics of old Catholic truth which he retained, faith appears to be almost entirely the confidence which assures one that God imputes to him the merits of Christ, by the illusion or delusion to which reference has been made. It is a faith of sentiment, a faith without dogma.

Now, of course, it is true that real faith does imply confidence towards our good and merciful God. It does this as well by its very nature, as by its object and by the relations which it establishes between us and God. It means the homage of our whole soul to the supreme truth, a response of our will and heart to the divine advances of love, a recognition of God's sovereign rights and of our duties in His regard. It is all this. But, at bottom, it is intellectual; it is the adhesion of the mind of man to the infinite truth of the infinite God.

The Vatican Council, in its masterly chapter on "Faith,"[1] thus puts before us the true notion of divine faith: "This faith, which is the beginning of salvation, the Catholic Church professes to be a supernat-

[1] Denz. n. 1789 ff.

ural virtue, by which under the inspiration and with the aid of divine grace we believe what God has revealed, not because by the light of reason we have seen the intrinsic truth of things, but on the authority of God Himself who reveals, who can neither deceive nor be deceived." [1]

So, faith is a manner of knowing, analogous to human knowledge based on testimony; yet it is distinct from this natural knowledge. All faith is taking the truth of a thing on the credit of others. When witnesses (one or many) with sure knowledge of what they declare and with truthfulness in their declaration assure one that what they state is so, their statement is hedged round with convincing authority, which demands assent from the hearer—and this assent is an act of faith. If the witnesses are human beings, the faith is human faith; if the witness is God, the faith is the divine faith of which we are treating. Such faith is reasonable above all. We must, indeed, know with certainty that God has spoken; and this fact of divine revelation is

[1] Ibid.

vouched for by the divine facts of prophecy and miracles, which are the sure signs of God's speaking and are proportioned to the intelligence of all. This faith is also firm above all things, since its firmness is commensurate with the motive of assent, which is God's infinite wisdom and veracity. It transcends natural knowledge, without at any time being in conflict with it. It is supernatural, and to arrive at it there is need of the help of God's grace—and this, even with regard to the faith, which, not as yet informed with the charity of God, is only the first step towards the justification of the sinner. Such, then, is faith.

Does all this seem to be without apparent application? Do we, perhaps, wonder why such insistence is placed on the right understanding of what faith really is? The wonder will cease, if we reflect on what has come from the wrong understanding of this foundation of salvation. For, Protestantism is rooted in this erroneous idea—and we have considered some of the appalling doctrines that arise therefrom. Besides, the false liberalism of to-day and of former

times springs from it. In fine, Modernism, which has been rightly called "a collection of all the heresies,"[1] grows out of it, and attacks not some particular point of truth, but the whole doctrine of salvation with all its foundations.

Born of the agnosticism of Kantian philosophy, nurtured by the sentimentalism of Schleiermacher, coddled by the rampant superstition of evolutionism, fostered by the pride of supposed learning and by the vaunted monopoly of erudition, Modernism has spread over the world like a baleful pestilence and has poisoned many a soul with its hellish vapors. Faith? revelation? dogma? It admits them all in word; but it denies them all in fact, as it disfigures and perverts the very notion of these fundamentals. And it has spread, oh so far! Within the Church, thanks to the watchful care of pastors and especially of the departed Pius X,[2] faithful and loyal and brave, its hidden revolting countenance was soon unmasked and the sheep's clothing was

[1] Pius X. Cf. Denz. n. 2105.
[2] Cf. "Pascendi dominici gregis," Denz. nn. 2071-2109.

torn from the ravening wolves who were destroying the flock of Christ. But, outside of the Church the evil has hardly been checked. It has infected the minds of pastors and people, and has carried them farther away from the portal of truth—and it must logically end in utter infidelity.

According to their principles of agnostic philosophy, the Modernists hold that God cannot be reached from the created things that are round about us, and that there are and can be no proofs of an exterior and objective revelation of God. It is from within man that the explanation of all religion must be sought. In fact, all religion is only a tendency of religious immanence, and faith is nothing more than a certain sentimentalism, engendered by the need of the divine. This need, which is at first hidden in the inaccessible depths of subconsciousness, rises at times to the level of consciousness and arouses a peculiar sentiment, which, without any judgment or grasping of truth, envelops God and in a manner unites man with his Maker. And this sentiment they call faith.

The system is forced to bury itself in the dismal depths of agnosticism, from which there is no rational deliverance. It confuses natural and supernatural religion, and really destroys both. It makes all religions equally true, and all of them false. It substitutes a faith of sentiment for a faith of intelligence. It does away with the necessity of dogmatic faith, in spite of Christ's teaching, safeguarded by His infallible Church. It sweeps away the duties and obligations of conscience in face of the legitimate authority conferred by God. No wonder, then, that in the presence of such monstrous vagaries of the human mind, gone mad before its destruction, the shepherd of Christ's only true fold, the watcher upon the towers of Israel, raised his voice in warning, struck the foe with the sword of truth, and branded the enemy with the curse of anathema.

Faith, true faith, is well worth the struggle which has been endured for it; for, as we have seen, it is the beginning of justification, the foundation and root of salvation. We have seen it exemplified in its type in the

Old Testament, Abraham, whom St. Paul praises [1] with the other great ones of the former dispensation: "By faith he that is called Abraham, obeyed to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance: . . . by faith he abode in the land: . . . for he looked for a city . . . whose builder and maker is God: . . . for which cause there sprung even from one (and him as good as dead) as the stars of the heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable: . . . by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son . . . accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead." [2] Faith was back of the heroism of Isaac. Faith nerved the meek bravery of Moses to the strength which led the Israelites through the dangers and horrors of sea and desert and enemies. Faith steadied the greatness of Samuel and David and the prophets.

And in the New Law it was faith that

[1] Cf. Heb. xi.
[2] Vv. 8-10, 12, 17, 19.

urged the chosen ones of the Master to go forth into all the world and proclaim His word to every creature. It was faith that steeled the hearts of martyrs and confessors to cast aside the fleeting greatness of this earth for the truer glory of the things that were to come. It is faith which to-day makes so many brave and loving souls turn aside from the paths whither the siren voice of pleasure or wordly success would lure them, to follow the Christ along the hidden road of total consecration to the Master and His little ones. It is faith which lifts up the hearts of at least some of God's great ones in the world to value Christian honesty above crafty financiering, to give their Creator a worship that is not confined to Sunday conventionalities, to think more of the judgment of an all-seeing God than of the "don't-get-caught" spirit of smug hypocrites, to refuse to coin from the tears and life-blood of the poor an unworthy fortune, whilst they prate about the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Truly, faith is great and precious. And,

therefore, as we prize the cause of God and as we value the souls of our friends and of our near and dear ones, who are meant to be the children of God, we should pray that the grace of God may be welcomed by all who are outside of the household of the truth and love of God, and that they may come home to the true faith.

Faith is also and ever remains the solid foundation on which our own higher holiness must be built. "And therefore," says St. Paul, "we also having so great a cloud of witnesses over our head," the great ones of the law that has passed, "laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God."[1]

Yes, let us *live* our faith. Let us take to our own inmost heart the thrilling exhortation of St. Paul, in the passage to which I have been referring. Have we faith? Yes,

[1] Heb. xii, 1, 2.

thank God! Then, let us show it in our daily lives, and in the things to which St. Paul exhorts as flowing from living faith, namely, in patience, in peace, in purity, and in charity.

The trials of life with its sorrows and its pains may hurt. They do hurt. But, in the spirit of faith, back of the pain we can glimpse the love of a Father; and then we will not let poverty dwarf our souls nor oppression stunt our lives nor anguish kill our glad confidence.

And peace? That too must be in our lives, peace with our brothers and sisters in the great family of God. And it will be, if faith is the lamp of our feet. Yes, and peace among the nations must come from faith. It may not be said that war, horrible as it is, is never justified. It is, indeed, the last resort in the final extremity of outraged justice; it is the ultimate arbiter in certain lamentable conditions. Yet, it is only a last resort; it can be appealed to only in the direst necessity: and such a need would never arise, if faith were to guide the actions of men and nations. The terrible, crushing

evils of the World War, when half the world was in the throes of a death struggle, when men had forgotten the civilization of ages and were revelling in the savagery of barbarism, when bloodshed and destruction were wasting a continent, when the god (or demon) of red war was rioting in the carnival of carnage, to be followed by the gaunt spectre of want, reaping the harvest of sorrow and tears and desolation and broken hearts—all this would not have been, if all the nations had looked to the truths of Christian faith and had been true to the principles of the gospel of the Prince of Peace.

Again, faith will make for purity, individual, domestic, and social, if it is living and active, as it should be. For, who would dishonor his body in the degradation of impurity, if he kept before his eyes the sacred truth that his very body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [1] and that his members are the members of Jesus Christ? "Shall I, then, take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God

[1] Cf. I Cor. iii, 16, 17; vi, 19.

forbid!"[1] Truly, the reign of lust is the revolt against the faith of Christ.

And finally, our faith should lead to sweet charity. And it will, if we look through the eyes of faith and see in our fellows the brothers and sisters of Christ, at least by destiny. This will lead to a charity which is broader and deeper than mere philanthropy; it will not only do the things of mercy for the children of men, but will spend itself for the sons and daughters of God; it will go beyond the healing of the sores of social evil, and will seek to prevent them, as far as this is possible in this earthly sojourning of mortal man.

So, let us live a faith such as this. Then will it not only be for us the beginning of justification, the foundation and root of salvation; but it will lead us on, whilst we "serve, pleasing God, with fear and reverence,"[2] and at last it will bring us home to our heavenly abode. There faith will give place to vision, and we shall be like God, because we shall see Him as He is. There

[1] I Cor. vi, 15.
[2] Heb. xii, 28.

we shall thank Him that here He led us on by faith, whereby we saw Him darkly as in a glass. Yes, we shall thank Him that the light of our steps was the twilight of faith, because through the dimness we could show our confidence and our love for Him, as we grasped our Father's hand in the darkness and travelled onward and upward to eternal bliss.

CHAPTER II

DAVID—REPENTANCE

Recapitulation of doctrine on faith. Further advance made by penance. Outline of rest of process of justification.—Nature of repentance; includes sorrow and detestation for sin, resolution of amendment. Luther's error: its basis. Truth founded on revelation. Necessity of penance.—Penance based on faith; term to which one comes through fear and hope and love.—David as type. His career: his sin: his return to God.—Application: sense of sin and acknowledgment of our position. Lesson of ages of faith. Condition of to-day: hypocrisy.—Excellence of penance, as preparation for sanctifying grace, as abiding state of soul through life.

For the good of our souls we cannot ponder too deeply or too often on the words of our blessed Savior, "Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he who humbleth himself, shall be exalted."[1] To those who have eyes to see, these words are fulfilled over and over again throughout the

[1] Luke xiv, 11.

whole of God's economy with man; and one of their truest applications is found in faith.

By faith we bow down before the authority of the all-wise and all-truthful God, and we offer Him the homage of our dependence, as we cling to the truth of His revelation just because He has made that revelation. The wise fools of this earth call this attitude a lowering of our intellect; and in their wild pride they reject it. They wantonly exalt themselves in their fancied independence; and the words of Christ are fulfilled to their undoing: for, they are brought down to the dismal depths of doubt and error. Witness the darkness of mind and the groping questionings and the pitiable mistakes and the childish superstition of the pagans of old: witness the agnosticism and atheism and indifferentism of so many cultured (?) ones of to-day. Contrariwise, we by faith humble ourselves before our God; and lo! we are exalted by being lifted up to the higher plane of the supernatural, where our true home is now to be found.

This faith, which is the first step in the way to life, the beginning of justification,

the foundation and root of all holiness, we have studied. We studied it, because we have taken for our consideration the preparation for justification in the case of adults. These are either raised for the first time from the depths of sin into the glad day of God's joy-bearing forgiveness and of the holiness which belongs to the children of God; or are brought back to God after having cast away even faith itself in their mad revolt of sin. For all of these, faith is the first step upward to God. (If faith has not gone down in the shipwreck of those who have had sanctifying grace and have lost it, that first step need not be taken; but the rest of the way to God remains the same.)

We must never lose sight of the truth that this faith is not, first and foremost, confidence in the good God, although it leads to this calm trust. It is not the blind clutching of sentiment after an unattainable something that mocks it forever. It is, on the contrary, an intellectual assent to the truth of God's word, an assent given under the sweet influence of divine grace which draws the will of man. The mind must, indeed,

clearly see that God has spoken; and this it does by the signs of God's revelation—by miracles and prophecy and by that standing miracle of His through all the ages, His only true Church. Then the intellect cleaves to God's word with a firm assent, measured only by the worthiness of God Himself to receive the homage of our minds and wills.

Faith does not dare to call God before the bar of human reason and make Him justify Himself before His puny creature. It does not, in the name of "sincerity" and "enlightenment," presume to accept only this revelation whilst it rejects that, because the one appeals to human likes and the other offends human dislikes. It does not babble the blasphemy that God's blessed revelation of truth can be a "stumbling-block" in the way of human advance towards God. To do all this were to stultify itself and to dishonor God. No, it humbly follows where the Master leads.

And this is the faith which justifies. Not that it is itself the whole of justification and holiness, as if God were consciously to de-

lude Himself and call us holy whilst we remain defiled; but that it is the beginning, which must be continued by further advances along the way to life, whither God is calling and drawing and alluring by His grace—a beginning which must lead onward to the works prescribed by the Master, whose decree it is that "without faith it is impossible to please God." [1]

After recalling these truths, let us go on to the further stage of this true "Pilgrim's Progress," and, once again, to put the matter before ourselves in a concrete shape, let us take an Old Testament type. David will be the type; and the further step towards justification and sanctification is repentance.

This repentance, or penance, is the onward progress towards God. Yet, other Milestones must be passed before one comes to repentance. After explaining that sinners must through God's grace conceive faith in the revelation of God, and especially in this that the impious is justified by God through His grace "through the redemption,

[1] Heb. xi, 6.

which is in Christ Jesus,"[1] the Council of Trent further declares that "knowing themselves sinners . . . they are moved against their sins by that penance, that hatred and detestation of sin, which must be had before baptism."[2]

So, penance is the second great advance; and it is itself, according to the Council, the outcome of holy fear of God's judgments, of hope in His mercy, and of at least the beginning of love for Him.

According to Biblical and ecclesiastical usage, repentance, or penance, means more than the mere retractation of a former frame of mind. Judas had such a retractation of mind; but, in spite of all that, he did not truly repent of his crime of treason against the God-Man. Besides and beyond this change, it means the detestation for sins committed and sorrow over them, in as far as they are an offence against God. Furthermore, this repentance implies that the penitent wishes to offer to God such compensation as he may be able to give.

[1] Rom. iii, 24.
[2] Denz. n. 798.

Lactantius, the great Christian writer of the early ages of the Church, refers to this true notion of repentance when he says that by penance the sinner comes to his senses and calls back his mind from its insanity; that he chastises himself for his madness and strengthens his soul to live rightly, and especially takes care not to fall again into the same snares.[1] And St. Augustine portrays the true notion of penitence in these words: "It is not enough to change one's manner of living for the better and to withdraw from evil deeds, unless by the sorrow of repentance, by the sigh of humility, by the sacrifice of a contrite heart one also makes satisfaction to God for what he has done."[2] The Council of Trent similarly tells us: "Contrition, which holds the first place among the acts of the penitent, is sorrow of soul and detestation for the sins committed, with the resolution of not sinning again."[3]

Luther, as we know from what we considered before, erroneously taught that pen-

[1] Inst. div. l. 6, c. 24.
[2] Serm. 331, n. 12.
[3] Denz. n. 879.

ance did not contain this sorrow, and that it was nothing more than another phase of a certain new life. False as this view is, it is quite in accord with the heresiarch's notion of justification itself. Why, indeed, should one be sorry for the past, if it was the power of God that irresistibly moved and pushed him along in his evil acts as well as in his good ones, not as a free agent, but like a leaf in a whirlwind or a straw in a torrent? Why should one resolve to undo the evil of the past by a new life, since his acts are always damnable sins, even after being covered with the justice of Christ? For, in the doctrine of Luther, sins they do remain forever, although God blinds Himself to their heinousness and, as it were, deceives Himself with the appearance of His Only-Begotten. Why should one determine to keep himself clean from the foulness of sin's depravity, when the only thing needed is to cling with confidence to the Redeemer by all-saving faith, which will hide the loathsomeness of leper-rottenness without removing it?

Repentance does include sorrow and de-

testation for the sins of the past and the purpose to sin no more. It grieves for what is worthy of grief, in the way and for the end in which and for which this detestation of the past should have place. In the flush of passion and the forgetfulness of God, sin's siren voice lured man away from God. But now, this very sin becomes the object of the soul's horror, and the sinner says: "Would that I had not sinned!" This is not a matter of an empty velleity, which would impossibly attempt to undo that which, once done, stands as such forever and forever. But, it is the efficacious banishing from the soul of all deliberate affection for the evil which once wooed man to destruction, so that now man hates what once he loved and abhors what once he clasped to his wretched heart. Thus, on the one hand, man assisted by the grace of God offers atonement to the injured Godhead, and, on the other, the divine mercy will accept this compensation, if it is in accordance with the conditions fixed by His gracious good-pleasure, and will bring the

sinner to the peace of reconciliation and to the glory of the children of God.

How do we know all this? We know it from the speech and on the authority of God Himself, who wills not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. The revelation of God, which is seized upon by the loyalty of faith, lights the way through the void, left black and appalling by the glimmering of mere reason, and tells us that there is pardon for our offences against God.

Unaided reason could do no more than suspect that perhaps God would forgive us our sins. It could not know with entire assurance. For, the forgiveness of sins depends upon the free will of Him who is offended; and, without a revelation from God Himself, we could never penetrate within the awful sanctuary of His outraged majesty. Reason could never tell us with certainty that there is forgiveness not only seven times, but until seventy times seven times; because reason could not assure us that there was for us more than one chance

and that the bolt of utter rejection might not fall upon us after our first act of treason.

So, we know that God will forgive the sinner, if the sinner, aided by the grace of God, avails himself of the means appointed by God for the canceling of guilt. Now, repentance is one of these means; and it is an absolutely necessary one. For, as without faith it is impossible to please God, so without penance it is impossible to come back to God after the wandering of sin.

Without going into the consideration of particular expressions of God's will as revealed in Holy Scripture, it may be noted that, whenever God offers the forgiveness of sin to His recreant subjects, He demands repentance, or penance, as a necessary condition for that pardon. This is true throughout all His dealings with a sinful race. This necessity of penance is also the burden of countless exhortations of the Fathers of the Church. Thus, St. Cyprian says that those who are without repentance for their crimes close the way to satisfaction and atonement.[1] St. Ambrose writes to the

[1] Cf. De lapsis n. 32 ff.

Emperor Theodosius that sin is not taken away except through tears and penance; that neither angel nor archangel can cleanse the soul; and that God, who alone can do so, will not grant remission save to those who bring repentant souls before Him.[1] And Augustine exclaims: "With what a front of shamelessness will one wish God's face to be turned away from his sins, if he does not say with his whole heart: 'For I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always before me'?"[2]

There can be no doubt about it, the justice of God exacts that at least the compensation of repentance be offered to His offended majesty. The wisdom of God will not allow Him to cast into the depths of divine forgetfulness the revolt which is still clung to in the madness of demented pride. The holiness of God will not let Him clasp to His great love the soul of one who is defiled with the hideous guilt of moral degradation and who is the willing slave of the archenemy of the Deity.

[1] Cf. Ep. 51, n. 11.
[2] Serm. 351, n. 7, referring to Ps. l, 5.

As we have seen, this repentance, which is unconditionally necessary for justification after sin, is based upon faith. It is not the immediate outcome of that faith; it is not the succeeding milestone on the way to life. Yet, it is the term or goal at which the sinner arrives before God's sanctifying grace comes to him; and the successive stages by which it is itself reached are fear of God's judgments, hope, and at least the beginning of love. These dispositions, by which one arrives at true penitence, we shall come back to in later reflections. Right now we must not pass by the pregnant words of the Council which point out a very necessary proximate preparation for repentance: "They (sinners) are disposed to justice, whilst, *understanding themselves to be sinners*, they are moved against their sins by a certain hatred and detestation." [1]

It is imperative that the sinner understand and admit and grieve over the fact that *he is a sinner*. And in this connection, as well as for the true portrayal of what repentance really is and what it does for

[1] Denz. n. 798.

the sorrowing soul, we may turn our eyes to the type of David.

David [1] was of the tribe of Juda. Bethlehem was the home of his boyhood, and there he guarded the flocks of Isai his father. In the days of his youth, when "he was ruddy and beautiful to behold, and of a comely face," [2] he was anointed by Samuel as the one to whom the Lord God would give the government of his chosen people [3]—for, the Most High had rejected Saul because of his sins.[4] Of David's nomad life with the herds, of his sojourning in the court of Saul until he was driven forth by the murderous envy and anger of the king, of his wanderings in the desert with its dangers and its alarms of war, we need not speak. Nor need we dwell at length upon the glory of his reign as king, first at Hebron after the death of Saul, and then, seven years later, at Jerusalem as king of Israel. We are not concerned with David the king, but with David the penitent.

1 Cf. *Dictionnaire Apologétique*, s. v. "David."
2 I Kings xvi, 12.
3 Cf. I Kings xvi, 13.
4 Cf. I Kings xv, 26.

Rationalists and unbelievers have scarcely found words hard and harsh enough to hurl at the Prophet King. To some of them, like Renan, David was no more than a robber, a filibuster, a bandit, a brigand of the worst type. With such calumniators as these there is and can be no question of a special Providence at the hands of God; for, they reject all thought of the supernatural and admit no intervention of the divine.

But, David was not what they paint him. True, he is not to be judged according to a morality and a civilization more advanced than that of his own time. In many things, even apart from the evil of his sin, he is not to be imitated by us; because, in many respects, we have loftier standards and higher ideals than those which were before him. It is true, he practiced polygamy; but though, as our Savior said, "from the beginning it was not so,"[1] still it was tolerated for higher ends and to avoid greater evils, and tolerated by the only one who could justify it, by the great God Himself. Yet he

[1] Matt. xix, 8.

was chaste, except in the one awful fall of his life. His piety was sincere and profound and intelligent, and not merely exterior and formal: he organized in Jerusalem the public worship of God. Kind he was and he loved his people, who in turn loved him. Gratitude and fidelity to his plighted word shone forth in many instances of his life. In a word, he was a pious Israelite, an able captain, a great king.

In the midst of all this greatness, he sinned mightily, and he repented heroically. Deep and black were the depths into which he fell! Off at the front, under the command of Joab, were his warriors.[1] They were before Rabba in the bitter hardships of a trying siege; but, David remained in Jerusalem in idleness and softness. And hurried along in the way of passion at the sight of a beautiful but weak woman, and driven by the hot surging of fleshly lust, he took another man's wife—and he sinned with her. And the woman was "Bethsabee the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Urias the

[1] Cf. II Kings xi.

Hethite,"[1] who at the front was fighting the battles of David.

The promptings of unholy love whipped the king on and crushed him down into lower depths of evil. For, David dispatched orders to Joab, that Urias the Hethite should be sent to him; and upon his coming, the king greeted him with honeyed words, and, after asking for news of the war, sent him into his house with gifts. At this juncture, how the wronged Urias towers in grandeur of soul above the anointed of the Lord! For, Urias went not into his house; he would have none of the comforts and pleasures of home, whilst his comrades and his leaders were hammered upon the anvil of adversity. "And Urias said to David: The ark of God and Israel and Juda dwell in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord abide upon the face of the earth: and shall I go into my house, to eat and to drink, and to sleep with my wife? By thy welfare and by the welfare of thy soul I will not do this thing."[2]

[1] V. 3.
[2] V. 11.

There spoke the hero, forgetful of self. Yes, without a doubt, Urias the Hethite here stands forth in a greatness that dwarfs the stature of the king of the land.

The king spoke him fair words—and then took a step which was to end in the murder of a noble man. For, "David wrote a letter to Joab: and sent it by the hand of Urias."[1] And the brave man went back to the front carrying his own death sentence; for the letter said: "Set ye Urias in the front of the battle, where the fight is strongest: and leave ye him, that he may be wounded and die."[2] "Wherefore as Jaob was besieging the city, he put Urias in the place where he knew the bravest men were. And the men coming out of the city, fought against Joab, and there fell some of the people of the servants of David, and Urias the Hethite was killed also."[3] Thus, to the filth of adultery, the blood of murder was added in the crime-stained soul of Israel's recreant king.

Yes, terribly did David sin. But nobly

[1] V. 14.
[2] V. 15.
[3] Vv. 16, 17.

did he repent; and his repentance began with the recognition that he was a sinner. The Lord God sent the prophet Nathan to David, and Nathan spoke thus to the sinful monarch: "There were two men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many sheep and oxen. But the poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and which had grown up in his house together with his children, eating of his bread, and drinking of his cup, and sleeping in his bosom: and it was unto him as a daughter. And when a certain stranger was come to the rich man, he spared to take of his own sheep and oxen, to make a feast for that stranger, who was come to him, but took the poor man's ewe, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger being exceedingly kindled against that man, he said to Nathan: As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is a child of death. He shall restore the ewe fourfold, because he did this thing, and had no pity."[1] The parable was clear

[1] II Kings xii, 1-6.

enough, though David did not as yet see through its transparent reference. The parable portrayed the evil done by the rich man against him who was poor and against the Lord God. That David could see; and, moved with wrath against one who would so ruthlessly violate rights, human and divine, David swore that he who had thus acted was worthy of death and would pay that penalty. But he did not recognize the miscreant as himself. Then it was that, in a voice which must have borne with it the thunders of the Almighty's wrath, whilst his eyes' flash cut its way through passion and selfishness down to the depths of the royal heart, Nathan said: "*Thou* art the man!"[1] And David understood that he was a sinner, and he was moved against his sin with a deep and whole-souled repentance.

The voice of that sorrow has been preserved for us in the tearful accents of the "Miserere," the psalm of pleading contrition. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out

[1] V. 7.

my iniquity. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity and my sin is always before me. . . . Cast me not away from thy face; and take not thy holy spirit from me. . . . Deliver me from blood," yes, from the blood of Urias the Hethite, "O God, thou God of my salvation. . . . A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." [1]

And the Lord was appeased and took away his sin, though temporal atonement had still to be offered. He took away his sin because of this penance, this repentance, which offered up the sacrifice of a contrite and humbled heart, bruised unto breaking. That repentance, like all true sorrow, was founded on faith and drew its strength from fear and hope and love; but its fountain-head was the realization of sin. David understood that he was a sinner.

As was said before (and we must not lose sight of it), we are tracing the preparation for justification in the case of an adult who is being brought for the first time to sancti-

[1] Ps. 1, 1-5, 13, 16, 19.

fying grace, as well as in the case of one who by casting aside even faith itself has lost all the supernatural gifts of God. But, this stage of repentance is of even wider application. Penance is the way in which *all* must be prepared for union with God by grace, after they have lost that grace by any grave sin, even without the loss of faith. Penance, too, is a disposition of soul which must permanently abide with us, if we wish to be true to God and to grow in that nearness with Him which will find its perfection in our eternal repose in Him in heaven.

The connection between faith and repentance is very, very close. It is so, because of the fact with which we are now engaged, namely, that to repent we must understand ourselves to be sinners. Now the knowing and acknowledging ourselves to be sinners depends largely on the influence of faith upon our minds and hearts.

The sense of sin supposes that, in face of our transgression, we do not refuse to look to the rights of God. A sinner is one who has violated the law of God and deserves the displeasure and punishment of the Su-

preme Lord of all. How, then, can one look upon himself as a sinner, if he does not give a thought to God and if he spurns the very mention of dependence upon another? How can one look upon himself as a sinner, if he keeps out of his life every gleam of divine light, which is trying to pierce its way with saving warmth into the depths of his cold and frozen heart? Now, without God's revelation and without faith in that revelation this forgetfulness may easily grow and this demented pride may easily hold man in blackest darkness. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons for God's revelation, which calls for faith, was that with regard to the truths of even natural religion and with regard to the knowledge of God unaided nature was in the greatest danger of this forgetfulness and error.

The pagan nations of old, in spite of all their intellectual achievements and in spite of all their sensuous splendor, show us how far away from religious truth and its consequences mankind will wander, unless God keeps them in the way of truth by the light of His revelation. Look at Rome, the best

of the pagan races—Rome with its ignorance and superstition and error and immorality! Little thought of being sinners entered the souls of these wanderers. And why? Because they gave little thought to God and to God's rights. And the lack of faith had much to do with this thoughtlessness.

In another and opposite way, the ages which by some are called the dark ages and by others are named the ages of faith, show the same truth of the effect of faith on real repentance. These ages of faith did not possess the fulness of material development in which our own time glories—though even in this respect those despised ages are not worthy of the obloquy cast upon them by the ignorant, since they are wonderful in many ways, unsuspected by the glib heralds of modern superiority. They were stained with many a sad tale of the fierce riot of savagery and brutal passion, unrefined by the gloss of modern civilization—though where that gloss and veneer went during the clash of arms in the World War, let the desolated, battle-scarred ruins of half a

world declare. Yes, the men of those times (many of them) sinned mightily, wildly, riotously in those rude old days. But then, too, many of them repented heroically. And why? Because they had not lost sight of the fact that this is God's world and that God has His rights. Many of them were hot, rebellious sinners; but, much more than the pagans of old and much more than the men of later days, they were honest sinners, as David was. And since they knew themselves to be sinners, there was a chance for the grace of God to conquer in the strife for good and in the struggle for their eternal salvation.

There is not so much chance for the wanderers of modern times. These unfortunates, reverting to the paganism of old, are reaping the harvest of disaster, sown in the enlightened (!) times which followed after the days of faith. God had His all-wise and all-loving plan for remedying the failure of mere nature to rise to the appreciation and the love of God. This plan was to send His Only-Begotten Son, who in the visible charm of His adorable and lovable

humanity would woo and win the hearts of mortal men. And the blessed Christ, continuing the same all-wise and all-loving providence, left behind Him His visible Church to carry on His visible work by visible means in favor of men who were so mightily helpless in face of the invisible and to keep them to the realization of God's supreme rights.

Such was God's hallowed plan. But, senseless mortals in the folly of human pride tried to thwart it. They spurned the Church—and that meant despising the Christ and turning their back on the Father who had sent Him. The first rebels may or may not have envisaged the full consequences of their revolt. Whether they did or not, meant the difference of heaven or hell for them; but it made no difference to the world, whether they did or not. In any case, their disciples did grasp these consequences, and they carried their masters' principles to logical conclusions.

The rejection of the Church gave place to the denial of Christ's divinity—which is the same as the practical denial of Jesus,

since a mere man, though the paragon of the race, could avail nothing for mankind's regeneration and salvation. From the denial of Christ the flood swept on to the denial of a personal God—and this, to the destruction of any solid foundation for responsibility on the part of man. And so, with almost inevitable necessity, the so-called Reformation paved the way for the ruinous advent of deists and rationalists and free-thinkers and agnostics and materialists and pantheists and atheists. The "sense of sin" was as remote from men's minds as in the wildest days of dissolute pagan excesses.

Without a doubt, the sinners of to-day have a lesson to learn from the sinners of the ages of faith, as they have also a lesson to learn from the straightforwardness of the repentant David. There is no gainsaying the fact that to-day countless hosts of men do not understand and admit themselves to be sinners. And, in truth, how can they, so long as they hold to the principles or lack of principles to which they cling? For, once more, to admit that they are sinners is to look to the soul, which is placed

in wild revolt against God, and to God, who is scorned by sin.

The soul and God! How many have gotten away from all thought of a soul! There may be such a thing—and there may not be: it is not worth bothering about! And God? What do unbelievers think of God, except to pour out the vials of their proud scorn upon those who, as they say, are craven enough to crouch in superstitious fear of the unknown, and base enough to try to propitiate an imaginary over-lord of all? What of those who love to call themselves broad-minded and tolerant and who prate about one religion being as good as another; who declare that it does not matter whether a man believes or what he believes; who extol a religion without dogmas and who talk sentimentally about Humanity, which they have deified, yet which they patronize with lordly air? What of those who do admit a God, but who consider it a condescension on their part, if they do aught unto His reverence or service? How, in heaven's name can men such as these recognize themselves as sinners as they go against the commands of the Al-

mighty? and how, then, can there be question of their repentance?

If men will sin, to their temporal and (unless they repent) their eternal undoing, would to God that they were honest! Then the dear Lord would have some chance with them. But, when they close their eyes to their own deformity; when they deceive themselves with a specious glossing over of exterior respectability; nay, when they go so far as to endeavor to justify their evil ways—there is hardly a hope for them to recognize themselves to be sinners, and thus to take a step towards a return to God.

The hypocrites! Hypocrites? What else are they, if they will proclaim "liberty, equality, and fraternity," if they will emblazon it upon their banners and carve it upon their buildings, and then use it as a cloak to refuse to God Himself even an equality with men, to steal and plunder the lawful possessions of ages, and to persecute the disciples of Christ?

Hypocrites? Why, they will preach to even unwilling ears the freedom of the press, and then they will turn that freedom into

license by spreading over the land calumnious lies, conceived with the hatred of hell and defiled with the obscenity of moral cesspools. They will parade before men a patriotism which boasts itself ready to do and to suffer all for the Constitution of the country, and then they will violate that Constitution by striking at its root principles of religious and civil liberty.

Hypocrites? They will wax eloquent over the undeserved wrongs of one who has made a mistake in a life partner and over the unhappiness which must be faced through long years, made longer by a misery too heavy to be borne; and then they will plead for that freedom which would undo the bonds of Christian society itself. They will grow indignant at the intolerance which would dare to stand between a man and a woman, whom God has *not* joined together, but between whom He stands by His uncompromising law; they will fiercely claim the right of each and every one to lead his or her own life and to get out of existence all the sweetness that may be forced from it, regardless of what they are pleased to

call "conventions" :—and it is all a trick, to hide the orgies of unrestrained licentiousness and the vileness of lustful indulgence, masquerading under the sacred name of love.

Hypocrites? How many will refuse to give to men and women a wage sufficient for maintenance as human beings, and will drive and goad them until they lose almost all traits of humanity and sink down to the dreary, hopeless monotony of machines, which must grind fortunes out of the very life-blood and heart-throbs and soul-aches and body-dwarfing of broken wretches! This they will do; and then they will smugly give of their tainted abundance to relieve the very misery for which they are largely responsible; and, as they give, they will warm their hearts with the thought of their good will towards men and their love for the little ones of Christ!

Hypocrites? How many are there (and God grant that we ourselves be not of the number!), how many are there who will try to excuse themselves from the evil of sin and endeavor to smother the reproaches

of a remorseful conscience by looking for reasons to justify their transgressions! They blind themselves to the harsh truth that they are wretched weaklings and mean ingrates, and, though in the depths of their hearts they know that they are liars against themselves and against God, they minimize and palliate and condone and excuse. Nay, they may go so far as to drag others down to their own level, lest the lives of these be a reproach to themselves in the ways of sin.

Truly, we may well repeat the wish: Would that men would not sin against God! but, if they sin, would to God that they would be honest and would understand themselves to be sinners! If they will not, there is no place for the beginning of repentance. If they will not, it may take the stroke of death and the lightning flash of divine judgment to thunder into their deadened souls, killed forever then, the terrible truth: "Thou art the man."

With faith, then, and with this realization that he is a sinner the way lies open to a man to come to God through penance. Fear of God's just judgments may then work its

salutary effect in his trembling spirit; hope in the mercy of the all-good One who has promised His forgiveness to the contrite and humble of heart will lift his soul up to better things; and love, at least the beginning of it, will complete the work of preparation, as the sinner comes to true repentance.

Sin should be the object of shrinking horror for a host of reasons. It is vile and loathsome by its very nature and entirely out of joint with the order established by God in His fair creation. Besides, it is an act of utter disobedience, the puny creature against the almighty Creator. It is disloyalty to the best of sovereigns and open rebellion in the presence of the Lawgiver. It is rank ingratitude to the best of friends and the most munificent of benefactors. Worst of all, it is proud defiance and bitter attack upon the very Godhead. Now, the realization of this unspeakable horror of sin, joined with the other motives of the dread of the doom to pain and to the loss of heaven, as well as of those appeals to what is nobler still, will tear the soul away from

adhesion to evil and will bring it to a sorrow and detestation of the past. To this sorrow will be added the firm resolution never again to stand out against the good God; and the heart will be strengthened to offer the atoning compensation of repentance to the offended majesty of the Eternal.

Then comes the sacred sacrament of Baptism, if there is question of the first union with God, or of the sweet pardoning of Penance, if it be a case of a renewed return to our Father; and the great Lover of mankind sweeps the soul within the embrace of His love and clothes it with grace, the glorious raiment of the children of God. In this manner is justification brought to the soul of the sinner, unless indeed the love which animates repentance is not merely the beginning of love, but the full, white-hot flame of perfect charity, which burns away the malice of sin. For then, even before the waters of Baptism have cleansed the soul or the hallowing of absolution has washed it from its stain, the child of God is united to his Father; though the sacrament must still be received, since it is not without

reference to its blessed power that holiness has been conferred.

Furthermore, as penance is the disposition which prepares the heart for sanctification after sin, so should it be the permanent state of our souls through life. We are not, indeed, to be forever coming back upon ourselves in over-anxious dread of the past; because that would be unfair to the loving forgiveness of our God. But, we should always bravely face the fact that we have sinned. That fact remains, and it will remain unto the endless æons of eternity.

The remembrance of our revolt against God will help to keep us humble, as we should be. When the tempter calls us to follow after the urging of passion through the ways of wanton revolt, it will be an aid to us and will strengthen us with the saving thought that we have, God knows! sinned enough already. It will make us sanely distrust ourselves and will keep us from rushing in like fools where angels fear to tread; it may force us to cry out in the face of spiritual death: "Lord, save us, we

perish."[1] It will be a comfort to us in the adversity of bitter sorrow, whereby we can make up to God for our debt of atonement to divine justice. It will help to arouse within us some of the apostolic spirit which glows in the heart of every true lover of the Crucified, and will urge us to do what we can by example, by timely word, and by prayer to bring back to the loving Christ the strayed ones whom He sought even unto the dire bitterness of Calvary. It will encourage us to bring even material assistance to those who are so ground down by the hard injustice of men, that they have not learned to look up to the love of a fond Father; who are so helplessly struggling with the meanness of earth, that they do not believe in the sweetness of a blissful heaven; or who are so blinded by the blackness of a night without a gleam of solace, that they do not conceive of the bright sunlight of the day of God's love.

And thus penance will be for us, not indeed the way to the first reception of the

[1] Matt. viii, 25.

soul's true life, though it is that for the adult sinner who first comes to sanctifying grace (for, this life came to most of us in the hour of unconscious childhood, without any preparation on our part); but, if we have ever sinned, it will be the plank after shipwreck, according to the conditions fixed by Christ—and then it will remain the secure means of never again wandering away from God.

So, let us clasp the spirit of penance to our heart of hearts. For, even after the grace of Baptism, there are only two ways to heaven; and these are the way of innocence and the way of penance. If we have not kept the first way, let us follow the second and never stray from it. It will lead us home.

CHAPTER III

ELEAZAR—FEAR

Fear a disagreeable thing. Fear, even of God, a hateful thing to many; yet it is sacred.—Intermediate stages between faith and penance: reducible to fear, hope, love. First of these, object of present inquiry.—Nature of fear and its value. Is strong call to goodness. Luther's error. Humble faith fears God's judgments. Vain reasons for denial of punishment.—Fear of God, holy and salutary: Old Testament commendation; New Testament lessons.—Kinds of fear: fear of slave; of servant of God; of child of Father. Value of each.—Effect of holy fear; Eleazar a type. Persecution against Jews: Eleazar a victim: his ordeal and his triumph. His fortitude mothered by holy fear.—Application: many do *not* fear God and *do* fear men: examples.

The subject with which we are to deal at this point of our considerations is one which has become particularly unpopular in these days of exaggerated self-appreciation. We are to reflect upon fear, the fear of God's just judgments.

Fear is almost always a disagreeable thing; and to be told that one is afraid is looked upon as a challenge to one's nobility of nature and as an insult to one's dignity. The dread of appearing to be afraid is like a lash to childhood; and boys will exult in such games as "follow the leader" just because they would prove their bravery, as they will expose limb and life itself rather than be written down among those who will "take a dare." And as they grow in years through youth to manhood, they still cling tenaciously to the cherished thought of their courage and indignantly resent any insinuation against it: they will not have it said that they are "afraid." They applaud in their inmost heart the statement of the old Roman who said: "I had as lief not be as live to be in dread of such a thing as I myself" or of others like to me.

There is no need to find fault with this sentiment, so long as it confines itself to one's attitude towards one's fellowmen. It is only when by a foolish, or tragic, exaggeration it would stand up against God that it is worthy of pity and condemnation.

For, if not to fear men is a mark of greatness of soul, to refuse to fear God is a sign of folly and of mad pride. Yet, it is but too sadly true that pride has so puffed up the minds of some that they deem it unworthy of their fancied greatness to stand in fear even of God Himself.

They bombastically keep the dread of God out of their shallow lives. And it is very easy for them to do so, since they have banished God from His own universe and have "put out the stars of heaven." As a consequence, they rush forward on their unrepentant way to the perdition which lies at the end of their mad career.

In the preceding chapters, in studying the process through which justification is reached by adults who have never had the grace of God or who, having had it, have lost all supernatural endowments by forfeiting faith itself, we have considered the path along which God leads them to life divine. First and foremost comes faith, as the beginning of justification and the foundation and root of all sanctification. Then, when the sinner, thus placed in relation to his

supernatural destiny, comes to realize that he is a sinner, he is moved by the grace of God to the sad, yet sweet, disposition of true repentance for his transgressions.

This repentance is the last preparation for the reception of the sanctifying grace of God, either through the sacrament of Baptism or of Penance, or, in the case of perfect repentance through charity, by the immediate inpouring of the life of the soul. Yet repentance does not at once blossom forth from the root of faith. There are intermediate stages.

As the Council of Trent tells us in the declaration which is our guide in our study, we come to repentance through fear of God's judgments, through hope in His mercy, and through at least the beginning of love. In fact, since repentance or penance or contrition (different names for the same thing) is the soul's sorrow and hatred for sin as an offence against God, joined with the resolve never to sin again, it may be motived by many virtues. But all of these motives, though at first glance apparently quite diverse, may be reduced to two classes, namely,

the goodness of God in Himself, and our own true good.

We may hate sin because of the penalty attached to it, "because by it we have deserved the loss of heaven and the pains of hell";[1] and then our repentance proceeds either from hope or from fear. Or we may detest it because of the evil of transgression against God; and if we abhor the transgression as an offence against the goodness of God in His blessed self, the source of our repentance is charity for God. The three big motives, then, from which salutary repentance springs are these: fear and hope and love. Let us at present deal with the first of these—with fear, which *does* lead to repentance.

For fear is not only the "beginning of wisdom"[2] which is based on faith; it is the beginning of that return to one's right senses which is found in true repentance. Fear, as we know and as St. Thomas[3] so accurately analyzed it, is the dread and hatred of some evil which is impending and

[1] Act of contrition.
[2] Ps. cx, 10.
[3] Cf. 2, 2, q. 19, a. 1.

is hard to avoid. Apprehension and trepidation of soul awake in face of the evil and flight from it arises because of its imminence. We are not really afraid of something which is quite easily avoided; nor are we truly in fear of a thing which is in no way likely to affect us. We may, indeed, say that we are afraid, say, of cyclones; but we do not, as a matter of fact, fear them unless they are impending and are threatening us. Thus, we do not fear a tornado which will come five centuries from now, nor do we stand in dread of a hurricane in Timbuctoo.

Now, fear in relation to repentance draws back from the evil which is impending and which is hard of avoidance. The evil in the case is sin, as an offence against God: and so, fear may have a twofold object. It may stand face to face either with the evil itself, which is sin, or with the person with regard to whom sin is evil, namely, God Himself, who is the Last End from whom we go away through transgression and the author of the penalties which He inflicts because of sin.

Yes, the fear of the just judgments of God, and most especially the dread of the awful penalty of hell, is a strong power dragging the sinner's broken will back from its revolt and up to God, who is merciful even in His threats of justice. This fear is good and salutary, when it positively excludes, as it can and generally does, any and all deliberate affection for sin.

And why not, indeed? By such fear one judges that the punishment for transgression is such that a sane man should avoid it. And this judgment is right. By such fear a man recoils from the evil of penalty: and to do so is to love himself with that well ordered love which he may and should have for himself. By such fear, too, a man may come to the point where, forgetting his little self, he is so engrossed in God's lovable magnificence, that through love he dreads the loss of his Supreme Good.

With clear insight into man's needs and into God's rights the Fathers of the Church correctly judged the worth of this fear as a motive for repentance. St. Chrysostom may speak for the rest. In his homilies to

the people of Antioch he says: "What is more terrible than hell? Yet nothing is more useful than the fear of it; for the fear of hell brings us the crown of the kingdom. . . . If fear were not a goodly thing, Christ would not have uttered many and long discourses, as He spoke about the penalty and the torment which were to come." [1]

In fact, the wonder is that men should ever have been foolish enough to doubt the efficacy and the worth of fear, since the blessed Lord so often placed it as a motive before the wanderers whom He sought to reclaim.

We saw in the foregoing chapters how Luther fell into error with regard to faith and with regard to repentance. In the matter of the influence of fear, as bringing one to repentance, he strayed again from the pathway of truth. According to him, the contrition which arises from the consideration of the pains of hell makes men hypocrites and deeper sinners than they were

[1] Hom. 15, nn. 1, 2.

before.[1] He says that such fear *forces* the will to hate evil, even though it does not wish to hate it—a peculiarly inconsistent remark from Luther, for whom every act of the will is forced, since it is without freedom. Error finds it hard to be consistent with itself.

True it is, that there is a fear which may coexist with evil and which does not at all exclude deliberate affection for sin. This we shall presently see, when we consider the different kinds of fear which may motive repentance. But there is a fear which tears the soul away from evil and leads it back humbled and bruised with contrition to the feet of God.

The denial of fear as a worthy motive is not restricted to those who have gone before and who have met their judge. To-day also we find only too many who will not hear of it with patience. In the imagined superiority of their fancied wisdom many have come to deny that there are such penalties for sin as may well shake the stoutest hearts.

[1] Cf. Denz. nn. 746, 818, 915.

Some of these men do not fear God because they scorn Him. In fact, it is a remarkable thing that the fear of God's judgments is to a great extent proportioned to the spirit of faith which actuates men, or, at least, to the strength of the realization of the truths revealed by God. The humble faithful ones of God fear Him; but the wise (?) scoffers disdainfully dismiss all thought of hell, which stands as an awful warning against sin and as a terrible call to repentance and to the service of God. They put it aside with a smile of condescension at the puerile superstition of those who are affected by it. They know more about the hereafter than does the great Lord and Master of all! They deny a hell in the face of the assertion of the God who made that hell, and they plume themselves upon their advancement and enlightenment, upon their scientific attainments and upon the breadth of their intelligence. Poor deluded wise ones!

Others again cannot be touched by the fear of such a punishment as that of hell, not because it is not terrible enough to strike

consternation into any but the utterly thoughtless and indifferent, but because they have made for themselves such a picture of the goodness of God as to do away with His justice. They speak feelingly and eloquently of the love of the Father in heaven. This all-embracing love of God cannot be extolled too much; but it must be lauded as the Christ praised it. Yet they make of God either a careless egotist, who does not care for the service of the work of His hands, or a sentimental weakling, who is so softly caressing as not to be able to strike the hardened rebel.

So, the first group of these wiseacres deny the punishments inflicted by God, because they imagine themselves too great to be punished; and the others deny them, because they picture God as too good to punish. And both are wrong.

The fear of the penalties which God threatens against sin is worthy of man and leads to God. From end to end the Old Testament is filled with commendations of this sacred fear of God and of His judgments. Thus, we are told, the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom,[1] as it is its crown;[2] nay, it is wisdom itself.[3] "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life."[4] "The fear of the Lord driveth out sin";[5] it "is the glory of the rich, and of the honorable, and of the poor";[6] it "is like a paradise of blessing";[7] through it one keeps away from all that is unworthy, because "the fear of the Lord hateth evil."[8] The good are praised and declared blessed because of it: "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in his ways";[9] the wicked are proclaimed to be such because they will not let its sacred influence reach their hearts.[10] Nay, it sums up the entire life of a servant of God; for Ecclesiastes says: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is all man."[11]

And in the New Testament, which is the covenant of love, fear of God's just judgments, far from being passed by, is insisted

[1] Prov. i, 7.
[2] Ecclus. i, 22.
[3] Job xxviii, 28.
[4] Prov. xiv, 27.
[5] Ecclus. i, 27.
[6] Id. x, 25.
[7] Id. xl, 28.
[8] Prov. viii, 13.
[9] Ps. cxxvii, 1.
[10] Ps. xiii, 3; x Heb.), 5.
[11] Eccles. xii, 13.

on with unmistakable emphasis. St. John the Baptist, the Precursor of the Savior, urged this motive on the sinners who came out from the towns and cities, from the shops, from the barracks, from the temple to hearken to his words of burning appeal. To the hypocritical Pharisees and the sensualist Sadducees he said: "Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance. . . . For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." [1]

The dear merciful Christ Himself did not pass by the appeal to the heart which comes from holy fear. Let the sentimentalists note it well—He preached the terrible doctrine of hell as a call to penance and a warning to godly living. He said: "And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into

[1] Matt. iii, 7, 8, 10.

unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."[1] Stern, yet merciful, words! The Master tells us that, if a person or a thing be as near and as dear to us, and apparently as necessary to us, as a hand or a foot or an eye, yet is an occasion of evil to us, we must tear it away or cut it away, though the pain be like that caused by the loss of a member of the body. We must do this, lest we fall into "the hell of unquenchable fire." And after each of the Savior's warnings comes the refrain, like the deep-toned tolling of a fu-

[1] Mark ix, 42-47.

neral knell, "Where the fire is not extinguished."

Again, in a few words He sums up the sentence of condemnation upon the reprobate at the judgment seat of God's justice; and these few words enfold more unutterable terror than is contained in all the efforts of fancy to grasp the excruciating anguish of dereliction: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." [1]

In view of these utterances, His story of Lazarus and Dives takes on a heart-crushing significance. [2] Buried in hell after a life of unrestrained indulgence, the rich man looks up to Lazarus reposing in peace and joy in "Abraham's bosom" and across the "great chaos" that is fixed between them he sends up his piercing plea for some solace; "for," he says, "I am tormented in this flame." [3] Yet there is no easing of his torture forevermore.

Let us never forget that these are the teachings of the gentle Jesus, who as our

[1] Matt. xxv, 41.
[2] Luke xvi, 19-26.
[3] V. 24.

Brother toiled for His dear ones and who as our High Priest offered Himself in sacrifice for His wandering loved ones. It is He Himself who, as the Judge of all mankind, will speak the terrible words, "Depart from me, you cursed," to those who have cast Him off utterly. It is He Himself who will banish them into the dungeons of torment which He, the just God, has made as the prison of His wrath. No wonder, then, that He should say: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him," God, Christ the Judge, "that can destroy body and soul in hell." [1]

If, then, God Himself can and does put before us the holy fear of His just judgments as a motive for repentance and for subsequent upright living, such a fear is without question good and salutary.

There are, indeed, different kinds of fear; and not all of them are good. First of all, there is a fear which is technically called "servilely servile." This is nothing more nor less than an added sin. In this fear the

[1] Matt. x, 28.

sinner has no thought of God, and he embraces and clings to sin in his imagined flight from it. This fear not only does not include the smallest vestige of the love of God; but it positively excludes such love. It holds back, or pretends to hold back, from the guilt of a forbidden action simply and solely and exclusively because of the penalty attached, in such sort that it has no regard for anything whatsoever except the penalty. By so doing the soul makes its own little self its last end, instead of gazing up to God as its last end. In this connection St. Augustine says: "It is one thing to do good through the desire of well-doing," even though this desire be aroused by the thought of the penalties attached to the opposite course; "and it is quite another thing to be so inclined to evil-doing that one would do it, if he could with impunity. For thus assuredly in the depths of his will he sins who refrains from sin, not because he wills to, but solely because he fears" [1] for himself.

Such unworthy fear is surely that of a base slave who is whipped to his task, whilst

[1] Contra duas ep. Pelag. l. 1, c. 9, n. 15.

his heart holds hatred for his master. A fear like this is not according to God; for God will have no slaves in His Kingdom, though He does will to have the loyalty of faithful servants.

Quite different from the base and sinful fear of a selfish and cowardly slave is the fear of a servant of God. This servant of the Most High may detest his sin, not indeed precisely because of the fault of transgression, but because of the appalling punishments which God threatens to those who violate His commandments. In this case the will first of all shrinks back from the punishment; yet it does not stop there. Because of this punishment, it abhors the guilt of sin as well. It does not, it is true, look to God before all else; yet it does not turn its back upon Him, whilst in the hidden depths of its affection it clings doggedly to the transgression. It deems hell an immense and terrible evil, which it may and ought to fly from; but it does not esteem hell as something more evil than an offence against the majesty of the great God. It considers the penalty as a grievous harm to

itself; but it does not place itself as its own end and it does not in the folly of personal idolatry worship itself as a god.

Besides, fear such as this, without ceasing to be fear, may by heaven's help be changed into an act of real love for God, in the spirit of a child who looks up to his heavenly Father. It does not forever crouch and cower and slink away from before the face of a Master, whom it does not and will not love.

And then, too, there is a fear which may mount to the very heights of divine love. By it one fears the guilt of transgression rather than the penalty itself. It is still fear, though shot through with love. For, the strongest fear is that which dreads to lose the love of the beloved; and the holiest fear is that of children who prize above all the favor of their father. By fear such as this the child of God raises his eyes and his heart to his Father who is in heaven. It may be based upon the love of hope for the good things which are in the Father's keeping. It may even get away from the thought of self, and, resting in the consideration of

the transcendent goodness of that Father in Himself, it may partake of the sacredness of blessed charity.

But, even if it does not mount so high, fear, whether it be the fear of servants or the fear of children of God, is holy and salutary. If it does not include an act of love—and it need not—it does not exclude it. If it is not the most perfect of motives—and it is not—it is a motive which is good and sacred.

We need not, in fact, expect more from our weak and wavering wills than is expected from us by the Father who knows the clay of which we are wrought. And so, even though the spirit of fear is not always the spirit of the heroes of God (and fear is in them too), still let us who are not heroes hesitate to scorn it. Although love is the greatest of all incentives to nobility of conduct and to achievements which gleam with the splendor of the sublime, let us not for that reason belittle the value of holy fear, which may whip us back into line when we have strayed away from the path of our duty.

Thus, sorrow which arises from the fear of God's just judgments is a blessed sorrow. With it the sinner is prepared for the reception of sanctifying grace through the sacrament of Baptism or, for his later falls, through the sacrament of Penance; and it may pass into that holier repentance which flows forth from the perfect love of God and which justifies even before the sacrament has wrought holiness through the power of Christ.

It is well worthy of remark at this period of our considerations that fear not only has a part in bringing us to repentance and through it to sanctification, but that it has a sturdy power to keep us true to God throughout life. For this reason it is worth our while to nourish it within our souls all through our days. Let us love God; for we can never love Him enough. But let us never forget that He is our Lord and Master, whom we must reverence and fear. If it is true that "fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain,"[1] this is true only of that

[1] I John iv, 18.

fear which does not rise to the height of filial reverence. The fear which dreads the displeasure of the loving and beloved Father must grow with the love which is its very soul.

And whom shall we put before ourselves to typify this holy fear of God? It may be hard to choose among its many exemplars. Every one of God's holy ones had this sacred fear within his heart and nourished the fires of love with it. Even in the New Dispensation of love every saint had it; every holy one of the Old Testament was filled with its saving spirit. Yes, it is hard to choose; yet, still looking to the heroes of the Old Law, we may select the noble old man Eleazar. He will show us some of the effects of this holy fear of God in keeping the soul true to God and to His blessed will.[1]

About the year 167 B. C. the Syrian monarch Antiochus IV, called Epiphanes, began a fierce persecution against the people of God and struck at the sacred religious rites

[1] II Mach. vi, 18-31.

of Israel.[1] He had profaned the temple, so dear to every Hebrew heart. He commanded all to depart from the ways of their fathers and to desert the law of Jahve. In consequence of his onslaughts against them, in Jerusalem idolatry was rampant; an idol was set up on the very altar of the Most High, and the temple was changed from the house of God into a shrine of Jupiter Olympius. Within the hallowed precincts of the shrine wild revelling and lewdness rioted. The ceremonial rites were banned; the holy books were burned; the Jews were commanded to eat the meats which were forbidden by the law of God.

It was a question of choice between death or exile on the one hand and duty on the other, between conscience and apostasy. And, says the Holy Scripture, "many of the people were gathered to them that had forsaken the law of the Lord: and they committed evils of the land."[2] Yet in Jerusalem itself and in other cities of the Holy Land some were still true to God.

[1] Cf. I Mach. i, 11 ff.
[2] V. 55.

On to Antioch the red tide of persecution swept; and it was probably there, in Antioch, that the hostile attack made a victim of the brave old man Eleazar. He was a venerable man well advanced in age. The weight of ninety years was upon his bent shoulders; yet he bore himself well and was "of a comely countenance."[1] Honorable he was in the community, and was chief of the scribes of the law. And now in the evening of his days he was forced to a conflict with the powers of evil. He was called to stand forth as the champion of right and the defender of his religion.

The minions of the king came to him and commanded him to eat forbidden meats and thus to despise the Jewish law. He bravely refused to do so. Then they forced the meat into his mouth, and tried to cow him with threats of torment. But he spat forth the hated morsel, and "choosing rather a most glorious death than a hateful life, went forward voluntarily to the torment."[2] He did not say to himself, as some of the

[1] II Mach. vi, 18.
[2] V. 19.

wiser (?) ones of to-day would have done, that it was only a matter of eating a piece of meat and having done with the affair, that a man is more than his food, and that he had his life to lead. Not he. He saw that there was question of being true to duty or recreant to it, of obeying or of violating a commandment which bore the sanction of God Himself.

With unshaken finality he chose suffering rather than disloyalty to religion and to God. His steps may have faltered, as he bent them towards the place of torment, but his spirit did not; and those who stood by marvelled at his courage. Moved by their old friendship for the man, they took him aside—perhaps from the presence of Antiochus, whom Josephus (though we know not upon what warrant) supposes to have been present. In their "wicked pity" [1] for him they then subjected him to another trial—an insidious one, masked under the appearance of lawfulness and beneath the smiling front of deceptive friendship. They would, they said, have meats brought

[1] V. 21.

which had not been offered in sacrifice to false gods and which were allowed by the Jewish code. Let him eat of these, and then pretend that he had eaten of the flesh of the sacrifice, as the king commanded that he should.

But the brave old warrior of God saw through the snare—and he rejected the proposal. He would not defile "the dignity of his age and his ancient years and the inbred honor of his gray head and his good life and conversation from a child: and he answered without delay, according to the ordinances of the holy law made by God, saying that he would rather be sent into the other world."[1] He would not dissemble and be the occasion of grievous scandal to others, who through his supposed desertion from duty might be led away into infidelity. No, he would not bring this stain and curse upon his old age.

And his motive? For, let us remember, this valiant hero serves us as a type. His motive? Let us listen to his words. His bright eyes must have flashed and his

[1] V. 23.

stooped form must have straightened to the stature of compelling dignity, as he told them that he would not be untrue to his God. "For though," he said, "for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty neither alive nor dead."[1] Because he feared his God, he would not offend Him.

His words sealed his doom. He was led forth to execution; and his former friends were turned into fiercer persecutors, as their craven spirits cringed beneath the lash of his noble words. They would wreak stern justice and vengeance upon him for his arrogance.

Death did not come in one swift stroke of the flashing sword. It came with slow and torturing steps behind the stinging, bruising, cutting blows of rods and scourges. Yes, they beat him to death. We need not try to visualize the horrid scene, as blow after blow rained down upon the broken frame of the venerable victim. But, well indeed may we approach as his end draws

[1] V. 26.

nigh and listen to the faltering accents which sound between his groans; for, they tell us once more the secret of his wondrous fortitude. "O Lord," he said, "O Lord, who hast the holy knowledge, thou knowest manifestly that whereas I might be delivered from death, I suffer grievous pains in body: but in soul am well content to suffer these things because *I fear thee.*" [1] And the holy book concludes the narrative with these words: "Thus did this man die, leaving not only to young men, but also to the whole nation"—and, we may add, to the whole world—"the memory of his death for an example of virtue and fortitude." [2] And, let us note it well, this virtue and this fortitude were mothered by the holy fear of God's just judgments.

Such, then, is holy fear, and such, its glorious type. Fear, holy fear, is the preparation by which the soul commences to undo the work of sin and begins to come back to God. Fear, holy fear, also serves as a strong motive to be true to God when pas-

[1] V. 30.
[2] V. 31.

sion calls and temptation lures and trial would break the soul. If a man has not yet for the first time come to God in the sacredness of sonship, holy fear will help him to take the first steps away from evil and unto goodness. If one has had the grace of God, but has scorned it and has sunk down into the depths of renewed transgression, holy fear should sound the trumpet call of alarm in his soul. If we are knitted to God by the hallowed bonds of His grace, the strength of this same holy fear will guard those golden links of love, that they may never be snapped asunder. Thus, all without exception may clasp to the inmost heart the solemn warning of the Wise Man, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is all man," [1] and those pregnant words of the dear Christ, "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell." [2]

Oh, the second warning of the loving Christ! Would that all men would heed it!

[1] Eccles. xii, 13.
[2] Matt. x, 28.

Would that all men would live according to its blessed wisdom! But they do not. Fear not men, but fear God? Men go against this advice doubly. They sin in two directions. For, many do not fear God and do fear men to their own undoing.

They do not fear God. Ever so many men have come to consider what is really a transgression against the law of God, and therefore a crime against the Almighty, as an indiscretion, a misfortune, a disease perhaps. This is their attitude of mind whether they deal with violators of civil law or with sinners against God. As for the first, they will talk maudlin sentiment and will maintain that the one and only object of the imposition of penalty is to safeguard society and to reform the so-called criminal. Retributive justice? The inflicting of the just deserts of the violation of law unto the end that the order disturbed may be restored? Nonsense and medievalism! And as for the second, namely, offenders against God's holy law, they put aside any thought of punishment for these "failings" as something monstrous, and style retribution as

outrageous and barbarous and superstitious. According to them, criminals, not only against society, but against the august majesty of God, are to be treated as for a sickness, coddled into a more healthy moral state, coaxed into amendment.

Such sentimentalists know so little about the infinite excellence and adorable majesty of God, that they fancy that they know all and are quite sure that penalty in retribution for guilt cannot fall within the economy of God's dealings with men. And so, they dream and dream, whilst the thunder storm is gathering which may bring in its wake temporal and eternal destruction.

Moreover, *all* men, as often as they rush into the rebellion of mortal sin, forget to fear God. If they will not blind themselves, they know that they may die at any time. They know not when the knell of death will sound for them; but this they know, or ought to know, that if when death strikes they are in the revolt of sin, the awful depths of hell will yawn wide to receive them and will hold them forevermore. And yet, men will sin and sin—and sleep! when they are not cer-

tain but that their next conscious moment may find them before an angry God—and after that, the endless blackness of despair. No, they do not fear God. But, in heaven's name, where is their faith, that they can thus set their eternal happiness upon the hazard of the dice? This, truly, is but another proof, where no further proof is needed, that, like the other holy things which tend to our supernal well-being, fear too is conditioned in its results by the liveliness of our faith.

If all sin means getting away from the salutary fear of God's judgments—and it does—this is especially true of the neglect of the religious observances to which men are bound under serious obligation. From some sins men may restrain themselves because of their regard for exterior respectability or because the refinement of their nature recoils from the vileness of certain excesses. But the shirking of religious obligations does not bring with it a social stigma, nor is it opposed to the delicacy of culture. And thus, some—nay, many—even of those who are gifted with the blessing of

the true faith of Christ's only Church, are shockingly remiss in this particular. They are so, because they have gotten away from the reverence which springs from holy fear.

The Church commands her children to attend Holy Mass on Sundays as the prescribed way of complying with the mandate of God, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." She bids them abstain from flesh meat on Fridays and to fast on certain days and during certain seasons: and she places this duty upon her members in order that, in memory of the sufferings of the Savior Christ, they may bear a share in His pains and may keep alive the recollection of His all-enduring love, whilst at the same time they offer up some atonement for their transgressions and store up the strength which comes from the mastery of the passions. Yet, there are found those who neglect these duties and violate these commandments, although the sanction of God Himself is back of the mandates.

There is no reference here to cases where there exist real excuses and valid reasons for failure to comply with the order of the

Church, who is not a cruel tyrant, but a tender mother. But, two pictures rise before me, different in every detail. I see men or women, who look out from their comfortable homes upon a rather dreary day and who decide that "really they do not feel like going to Mass to-day and do not think that they will go." They are too indolent to bear the inconvenience required to bestir themselves. They may prefer the satisfaction of a leisurely reading of the Sunday paper or the pleasure of a trip into the country or a round upon the links—or what not, to the fulfillment of what is a bounden duty. Or, I see them, with full knowledge that to-day is a day of abstinence, decide that they do not care for a diet without meat or that they do not wish to cause any annoyance to a host or hostess by refusing to accept the goodly abundance set before them—and Friday may take care of itself! And as I look at such conduct, I cannot help wondering what men and women, such as these, would have done or would do, if they were placed in circumstances of real difficulty.

For, I see another picture, the picture of the venerable old man who refused to compromise his loyalty to his church, which brought the commands of God to him. I see him beaten and broken and bleeding and dying for fidelity to the religious observances of the law that bound him. Oh, the difference! And the reason of the difference is precisely the different place held by the holy fear of God in his life and in the lives of the comfortable egotists of today.

Such people as these do not fear God. Yet there are countless others who by their craven fear of men go against the other part of Christ's exhortation. It is not a pleasant thing to have our bravery questioned and to have the charge of cowardice thrown into our teeth. But sad truth compels the statement that the number of those who do fear men, even more than they fear God, is legion.

We should not fear those who can go so far as to kill the body. Thus speaks the brave Christ. Yet we do fear the lifted eyebrow, the scornful word, the condescend-

ing smile of pity or contempt—and we turn away from God and duty. These strictures are not random talk. We know what human respect is and what it does. And by human respect is not meant the proper regard for our fellowmen and for their reasonable opinions of us or of our doings. Such regard is quite proper. But, human respect does mean that consideration for the thoughts of others which weighs in the balance against our fulfillment of duty.

Many a man would rebuke the narrator of improper stories and indelicate jests, or, if he be not called upon to do that, at least he would take himself away from the company of such as indulge in the like—if he did not fear the thoughts and tongues of men. Many a woman would refuse to countenance, by her adoption of it, a manner of dress which is unworthy of the sweet sacredness of her womanhood and which makes a direct appeal to the carnal—if she were not afraid to place herself in opposition to the dictates of a foolish fashion and to brave the sharp words of her associates' criticism. Many a person would recoil

from staining the purity of mind and soul by reading what is besmirched with the vileness of the unclean, or by patronizing plays which pander to the pruriency of the indelicate—but for the apprehension of the sneers of others. "What will others say?" is often more powerful than "What does God command?"

What will others say? For matter of that, what difference does it make what they will think or say, if only we are true to ourselves and to our God? Shall we be afraid of those others, who after all are only our fellow servants before the majesty of our Maker? They are not greater than we, that we should cringe before them. Rather, when we are on God's side (and we are always that, when we are for the right), we are greater than those whose displeasure we fear so much.

We should love our fellowmen; yet we should not fear them. It is God whom we should both fear and love. Now, the more we fear God, the less we shall fear men; and the more we love God, the more we shall love our fellowmen. Hence, let us use all our ef-

forts to grow in the fear of God and in His love. Then we shall do our whole duty as regards our fellowmen.

The sacredness of holy fear will not only bring to God the poor unfortunate who has not yet known His love; it will not only draw away from the paths of prodigal indulgence the wanderer who has wasted his substance living riotously: but, in the souls of those who are united with their Father, it will be a safeguard all through the days of trial here below. And therefore let us hold fast to this salutary fear, and let us remember that the same God who gives the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind,"[1] tells us in His unerring wisdom: "Fear God, and keep the commandments: for this is all man."[2]

[1] Matt. xxii, 37; Deut. vi, 5.
[2] Eccles. xii, 13.

CHAPTER IV

JOB—HOPE

Hope, next step towards repentance and justification. Power of hope; in material things; in supernatural efforts.—Nature. Material object: God our Supreme Good; means to God, namely, help of actual grace and remission of sins. Our need of grace. Hope flows from faith. Errors as to nature of hope. Twofold error of Reformers; by exaggerating; by minimizing. Motive of hope is holy; proof.—Necessity for repentance (example of Peter and Judas); for conduct of life.—Job as type. His history; his example.—Grounds of hope. Christ's loving care for us.—Effects: patience; spiritual outlook as against materialistic viewpoint; courage.

In tracing the way which leads to the soul's life of justification through the applied merits of Christ the Redeemer our investigations have shown us that, for the adult who for the first time comes to the grace of God, faith is the earliest milestone on the heavenly pathway. The other stages are common to all who are deprived of

sanctifying grace—sinners all, but possessed of the faith which places them in supernatural relation to God.

The second step forward in this true "Pilgrim's Progress" is penance, or repentance. This repentance may be based upon the love of God who is offended, and thus will constitute perfect contrition; or it may stand upon grounds which are less noble than this, but which still have reference to God, and thus will constitute imperfect contrition or attrition. In either case the process of repentance begins with the realization of one's sinfulness before an offended Lord. Fear of God's just judgments strikes salutary terror into the trembling soul and makes it grasp the dread truth that "it is an evil and a bitter thing to leave the Lord . . . God." [1] After this, without taking his eyes from his own vileness and from the awful punishments of a justly angered God, the sinner looks up to the loving-kindness of his Father in heaven. Justice may well crush the cowering heart into nameless fear of overwhelming disaster; but the

[1] Jerem. ii, 19.

mercy of the great Lover of men lifts the soul up to the hope by which it trusts that because of Christ God will be propitious.

Yes, hope enters into salutary repentance. Hope moves the soul against its sins. Hope has its part in rounding out the preparation for sanctification.

Even in the natural and material affairs of life hope is all powerful. The desire of some good which, whilst hard of attainment, is still within the reach of energetic action (and such a desire is precisely what hope is)[1] is back of much that is accomplished in this world of ours. Men will labor long and hard and in trying circumstances; for years they will bear the strain of mental or bodily exertion; they will plod on under a burden which is all but too heavy; they will perseveringly push forward the affairs of their home, their city, their nation, and they will endure the pangs of waiting—if only they can cling to the strength of hope. It was hope which nerved the founders of our nation to brave the storms of war. It strengthened each soldier in the fight and

[1] Cf. St. Thomas 1, 2, q. 40, a. 1 and 2, 2, q. 17, a. 1.

in the harder agonies of want or famine in wintry marchings and hidings. It gave courage to the hardy pioneers who with axe and rifle opened up and held the vast stretches of land that lay to the West. It sustained in every trial and comforted in every adversity, as the nation grew through struggle to the stature of manhood.

There can be no doubt about it, in the affairs of men if hope is gone, energy is killed. When the gentle, but potent, power of hope is destroyed, what will become of a man, as an individual? as the head of the family? as a member of society? As an individual, his activity dies as if a knife had pierced its way to the heart or a slow poison had drugged the springs of life. For him there is no mental effort and no bodily exertion, but only a dreary, monotonous, soul-killing dragging out of existence without the smallest exhilaration of the joy of living, until he either throws himself into the vileness of dissolute excesses or cuts short life's bleak way by a suicide's death. As the head of the family, he has no care for his own, no heroism of sacrifice,

no thought of being up and doing, when the cold hand of despair has strangled the life of hope within his soul. And if, as a member of society, his hope is lost, if the nation were to lose heart by the despondency of its sons, progress would cease, activity would languish to its death, and the dreary desolation of chaos would engulf the conquests of ages.

Now, if even in the natural and material affairs of this world hope is such a power and such an absolute necessity, there is still greater need for its strength in the supernatural efforts which must lead us to our heavenly home. If in these supernatural strivings we lose our hold on it, we shall drift down and down, even to the abyss over which lie everlasting death and despair.

Without hope there would have been none of the greatness which we see in the soul-world of mankind. The heroism of the martyrs would have been an impossibility. The sainted exaltation of confessors and virgins would never have rejoiced the heart of God. The loving repentance of sinners and the holy, though hidden, lives of God's

uncanonized saints would never have claimed the regard of heaven.

And the need of this supernatural hope is the greater, because the things of the world of spiritual excellence are able to draw us less perceptibly than the things of the material universe. Heaven and the ways which lead to it; God and His love or His displeasure; the dignity of the possession of grace and the economy of the ways of God towards men—all these are more distant and more vague to us than are the things that lie about us and beckon us on to effort. Yet they are more vital to us than all the things of earth and they should mean more to us than anything that this world holds. For, if we are to reach our heavenly home, we must act, and if we are to act, we must hope.

As to the nature of hope (and we must conceive it correctly), we can derive a satisfactory notion of what it truly is from the act of hope, which we repeat in our prayers. Therein we say to God that, relying on His infinite goodness and promises, we hope, that is, we firmly expect and confidently

trust, to obtain pardon for our sins, the help of His grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. By such an act, supernatural in its character and elicited by the aid of God's accompanying grace, we rely on God's pledged word to assist us to tend courageously towards our supernatural destiny by the means which He has provided for this purpose. And the means are: the forgiveness of our sins and the help of His grace. Thus, the object of our confiding trust, the thing towards which this saving hope reaches forth its longing, is, first of all, God Himself who is our true happiness and our blessed joy, and, secondly, the means of coming to Him. The first imports the salvation of our soul in the possession of God in the thrilling vision of the unveiled Godhead; it is the "life everlasting" which is the consummation of the soul's true life through sanctifying grace. The second signifies the assistance of God's actual grace and the remission of our sins.

The actual grace of God is that transient operation of the Godhead upon our spirit,

in the enlightenment of our intellect and the strong impulse to our will to cling to good and avoid evil. This actual grace of God we need: without it we can never come to salvation.

The Pelagians and Semi-Pelaganians, ancient heretics, followed by several modern sects, such as the Universalists and the Unitarians, deny that man needs any help above his nature in order to reach his last blessed end. In the pride of human sufficiency they reject mankind's elevation to a supernatural destiny, the fall of the human race through the disloyalty of its first parents, and the need of a Redeemer to buy back the forfeited glory. Yet, the voice of God proclaims them to be in error; and it is to God, and not to human pride, that we bow down in assent.

We need this grace of God for the twofold reason that without it we will not conquer in the fight which rages between the spirit and the flesh, and we cannot perform any supernatural act which will lead us to our destiny as children of God.

As to the first, we know by bitter expe-

rience the sting of concupiscence; we have felt the fury of the storm of temptation; we have looked full upon the face of the death of the soul in the attacks made upon us by the powers of hell. Where shall we get the strength to conquer in the fight? From ourselves? Yes, from ourselves, reply those who are too proud to acknowledge their weakness. But their weakness answers for itself; and the world that is not of God proclaims aloud its inability to stem the torrent of corruption.

Our help must come from God—or we fall. Surely, if, in the fight against evil, man could win of himself, the great St. Paul would have been equal to the task. His loving daring for the cause of God was gigantic; he was burning up with zeal for the glory of God's majesty; by the strong chains of unlimited devotion he was linked to that Jesus whom once he had persecuted; he passed over most of the then known world in a fiery whirlwind of apostolic energy which yearned to bring all men to Christ. Truly, a hero and a spiritual giant! Yet he tells us that he was helpless of himself.

"Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [1] That is the agonizing cry of a heart, which felt the sting of evil, the weakness of nature, and the need of help from some power higher than self. Paul does not rashly claim that he can win by his native strength of will, by the remembrance of his dignity as man, by regard for the good opinion of others. Not he. The fools do that—and they fall. Who shall deliver me? "The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord." [2] And that is the answer which is true with God's own truth.

Furthermore, as grace is necessary to put down the risings of concupiscence, so too is it necessary to accomplish any of the supernatural actions which alone can lead us to our heavenly destiny. Since God has raised us up to an end beyond the capability of any created nature when left to itself, only such actions as are in the same elevated plane can conduct us to that end. Actions which are merely natural, though good, have

[1] Rom. vii, 24.
[2] Rom. vii, 25.

no proportion with a destiny which is supernatural; and hence, if they are to count, they must be lifted up to the divine order. Now, for this uplifting we are dependent upon actual grace. It was of this dependence upon God's grace that the Savior spoke when He said: "Without me you can do nothing." [1] As the branch can bring forth no fruit, unless it remain in the vine and receive nourishment and life from the parent-stem, so unless we remain in Christ and are subject to His activity which comes to us through grace, we can bring forth no fruit which will find favor with the heavenly Master of the vineyard.

This same assistance of God's grace is necessary also for the remission of our sins. Without grace man might feel some natural regret and sorrow for past transgressions; but, unless actual grace touch that sorrow, it remains of the earth earthy and cannot bring down from the Father of mercies a pardon for sin.

Such, then, is the twofold object of our hope. The reason of that hope is God's

[1] John xv, 5.

goodness in our regard and His unwavering fidelity. We shall return to this reason or ground of our confiding trust in God later on in this chapter.

Hope is based upon faith and flows forth from it as naturally as water gushes from a fountain-head. Just as one who has no faith in heavenly good things cannot desire them with the longing of hope, so too one whose faith shows him the thrilling joy of heaven, waiting for him as the reward of his labors for the Master, can hardly hold back the movement of his soul towards the attainment of these blessings. This is the sense of St. Gregory the Great, who says: "On hearing" of the joys of the supernal city, "the soul is on fire and longs to be where it hopes for endless gladness."[1] And St. Bernard remarks: "Faith says: Good things, great and unthinkable, are prepared for God's faithful ones. Hope says: They are kept for me."[2]

Such is hope—its nature, its object, its reason—according to the true teaching of

[1] Hom. 37 in Evang. in Breviary in Common of a Martyr.
[2] In Ps. 90, Serm. 10, n. 1.

Mother Church. But error stalks abroad and strikes its blows at truth, especially where interests are most vital. Our past considerations must have shown us that by this time: it is the case too in the present matter. The old Reformers, so-called, erred by excess in two directions: on the one hand, they exaggerated the rôle of hope, whilst changing its name; and, on the other, they minimized its efficacy in its own proper sphere.

In the beginning of our study we considered the old Protestant position with regard to faith as justifying of itself. This faith of theirs, to the effect of which they attach an unwarranted and exaggerated importance, is not intellectual assent to the truth of God's revelation: it is really the hope or the confidence that the divine mercy will overlook our sinfulness because of Christ. They maintain that they are altogether and unreservedly certain that they are justified. Nay, they hold that only he is forgiven who believes, or trusts, with certainty that his sins are taken away by the imputation of Christ's merits, and that

he is one of the predestined. They declare that he who does not so trust doubts about God's promises and about the efficacy of the death and merits of the Savior.[1]

But, this is error. It contradicts the teaching of the dear Christ; and it is very properly condemned by the solemn utterance of the Council of Trent.[2] It is, of course, true that no one with love for our Blessed Savior and with reverence for God can doubt of the mercy of the Most High or of the merits of Christ. But, on the other hand, no one whose pride has not blinded him to the weakness of his own poor nature can cease to fear for himself and for the constancy of his fickle will.

Of a truth, hope is firm and unwavering. It must be; nor is there any cause for apprehension when we look to God. He will bring us home—if we do our part. Yes, if we do our part; and there's the rub. We must fear for our weakness, not with a fear which will make us doubt God, but with a fear which will sharpen our zeal and drive

[1] Cf. Denz. n. 802.
[2] Denz. n. 822.

us ever closer to Him who can make us stronger than ourselves. Our fear of ourselves will make us cleave closer to Him whose nature is almighty goodness and whose work is mercy. For, the Psalmist says: "They who *fear* the Lord have *hoped* in the Lord: he is their helper and their protector."[1]

So, the faith divine which works unto salvation is not this fiducial faith of the Reformers, which is really hope, exaggerated to presumption: and faith does not justify of itself, but is only one of the dispositions which prepare the way for sanctification.

Whilst this erroneous view of the Reformers exaggerates the rôle of hope, which they call faith, the value of hope, understood according to its true nature, is despised by them. Hope is not as noble a motive for sorrow over transgressions as charity is; but it *is* holy. Hope lifts the soul up to God and makes it rely on the strength of divine aid. Hope longs for God, not indeed for His own infinite goodness in Himself, but because He is our Supreme

[1] Ps. cxiii, 11.

Good; and it sorrows for sin because of the loss of eternal happiness. And such a hope is hallowed.

But, by Luther and Calvin and their kind, all this was stigmatized as unworthy and evil and hypocritical. They said that the sorrow which arose from the thought of the loss of eternal happiness made a man a hypocrite and more of a sinner than before. Oh, the folly of poor human pride which would pose as knowing more than God and better than the Savior of the world!

Our divine Lord proposed the reward of heaven as an incentive to noble activity. "Be glad in that day and rejoice," when you shall bear misfortunes for the name of the Lord; "*for* behold, your reward is great in heaven."[1] The Apostle St. Paul praises Moses for his courage under tribulation, a courage which was motived by his hope of the good to come, "for he looked unto the reward."[2] He tells the Colossians: "Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing

[1] Luke vi, 23.
[2] Heb. xi, 26.

that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance."[1]

Thus we see how over and over again in the inspired word of God reward is proposed to men as a motive to urge them to noble deeds. And, in spite of what may be said by blinded men who have gotten away from the truth of God, it is clear that what God Himself proposes to His children as a reason for their conduct cannot lead them to what is unworthy or hypocritical or sinful or deserving of divine reprobation. Whilst, therefore, hope is not sufficient for justification, it is a holy and salutary disposition of soul leading on to God.

Holy as it is, it is also quite necessary. It is so under a double title: first, it is necessary as a preparation for repentance; and secondly, it is necessary for the right conduct of life and for reaching our heavenly home.

Its necessity for repentance is pointed out by the words of the Council of Trent to which reference has so often been made.[2]

[1] Coloss. iii, 23, 24.
[2] Denz. n. 798.

How, indeed, could the sinner begin to come to God through repentance, unless he hoped for the remission of his sins? When the realization of the truth that he is a sinner has brought a man down from the unstable heights of his revolt and has placed him face to face with the judgments of an angry God who will strike at sin with infinite hatred after the time of mercy will have passed, how can the sinner mount up to his Lord, unless the sweet and comforting power of hope lift him? If it does not raise him up, he will grovel in his misery and sink down into the lowest depths of despair.

Do we need proof of this? If we do, let us look at two scenes which stand out from the gospel pages. And first—it is the court of the High Priest. A fire casts its ruddy light upon the crowd gathered about to warm themselves in the chill night air. A motley crowd it is, made up of servants and hangers-on of the palace. It is buzzing with excited talk about the Prophet of Nazareth, who even now stands for examination before

the great Annas. In the midst of the huddling throng stands a strong-faced man, hardy with the might of the sea which has nurtured him. It is Peter the Galilean.

But a short time ago he was in the company of the Master, for whom and with whom he professed himself ready to go to prison and to death. With wonder stunning his heart he had watched as the beloved Master struggled with the agony which was crushing him to earth in the sombre garden of Gethsemani. Whilst the weary moments dragged by, he had slumbered; and he was aroused by the Master, as the murmur of the approaching mob came to him from the gateway of the garden. When the foremost ruffians of the band drew near to lay hands upon his Leader, Peter struck with the sword—and he must have struck to kill. Then his world fell in crumbling ruins about his head; for, in bonds and all alone the Master was led away captive.

With John, the beloved, Peter followed afar off, and came into the court of the High Priest to be nearer to his Lord and to see

what would come. And now there he is in the midst of the servants.

The crowd casts upon him glances which speak of suspicion and distrust, and fear begins to tug at his heart-strings. "Art not thou also one of his disciples?" [1] they ask. And Peter denies. Again he is questioned; and again he denies. Yes, at the voice of a girl, he gives a lying answer. And at length Peter begins to curse and to swear that he knows not the man.[2]

Peter, what have you said and what have you done! Before this, you said with a holy fervor, lighted at the torch of divine revelation, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." [3] This very night you received your first Holy Communion and were made a priest of the Most High by the Christ whom you loved. You were ready to die for Him; and you declared that, though all should deny Him, you would never fail in your faithful allegiance. And now—you "know not the man!"

From out of the hall where He has stood

[1] John xviii, 25.
[2] Cf. Matt. xxvi, 74.
[3] Matt. xvi, 16.

before Annas, the Savior is led across the court into the portion of the palace set aside for the use of Caiaphas. He is going to His doom; and He knows it. He is entering into the place where the trap of hatred will be sprung. But, in His hour of sorrow, He thinks of His recreant Apostle. "And the Lord turning looked on Peter"[1] with a look bearing pain and reproach and sorrow, but telling of mercy and love. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going out, wept bitterly."[2] Yes, out into the night there stumbles a broken-hearted man, and the darkness before the dawn hides him from our sight.

Whither does he go, tottering under the burning lash of regret in his soul? We know not. But, we know whither he came at length. He came to the feet of the Mother of Jesus. For, on the first Easter day it was with John, who had taken Mary to his own, that Magdalen found Peter.[3]

[1] Luke xxii, 61.
[2] Id. vv. 61, 62.
[3] Cf. John xx, 1 ff.

And at the feet of the Mother, who has ever been the refuge of sinners and the comforter of the afflicted, Peter must have poured forth his tears of broken-hearted sorrow. At her feet he must have groaned the halting words of grief, which had grasped the voiceless love which spoke from the eyes of the Christ as He went forward to His fate. With a sorrow which made for forgiveness, Peter repented, because hope shed its soft sweetness through the thick, black night of his treason and lighted the way to the loving-kindness of God.

And the other scene? Look at the swift-moving figure that takes its way through the night, scurrying from the Supper Room to the dwelling of the priests of the Temple. The man has just now left the company of Christ, and in his traitor soul throbs the resolve that he will do quickly what he has determined to do. Avarice has corroded the heart of one who was chosen to be an Apostle of the Master, and it has made him what the Master called him, "a devil." [1]

Judas has covenanted with the enemies of

[1] John vi, 71.

the great Prophet to deliver Him up to them: he has been seeking an opportunity to accomplish his fell purpose. And now the time has come. Quickly he arranges for the help he needs. Cautiously he warns his associates of the care to be taken after the sign, which he agrees upon, shall have pointed out the victim. Then on to the garden of Gethsemani.

There at the gateway the mob pauses to put some order into its chaotic confusion. Then the Master comes forward with His disciples—Christ at the head of His own; and Judas walks in the forefront of the enemies of the Master. And the Savior and the traitor Apostle stand face to face!

The questioning; the prostration of the front ranks of the mob at Christ's word of power; the turning of the soldiers to the traitor leader, who must give the sign lest under the uncertain light of the moon and the flaring of torches there should be any mistake—and then the fallen Apostle steps forward to his forsaken Lord. He bends towards Him: he places his hands upon His shoulders, and with the horrible perversion

of the sacred sign of love he lays his traitor lips upon the Master's cheek. "Hail, Rabbi"[1]—and he kisses Him. "Friend, whereto art thou come?"[2] "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"[3] Then the seizure of the Savior and His sad journey to His doom.

After the remnant of the night has passed, a procession takes its way to the palace of Pilate, that Rome may set its seal upon the condemnation of Him whom the Sanhedrim has devoted to death as a blasphemer against God. Judas sees death leering forth from the faces of the triumphant mob, and he knows that the Christ is on His way to destruction. The realization of his awful deed rushes over his crushed spirit. He hates the money for which he sold his Master; and, with a very hell in his heart, he rushes to the Temple to find those who had bought him and to cast down upon the floor the price of innocent blood.

Dark was the night into which Peter went forth after his denial of his Lord; yet it was

[1] Matt. xxvi, 49.
[2] Id. v. 50.
[3] Luke xxii, 48.

brightened by the comforting glow of hope. But, though the morning splendor of the Eastern sun is gilding the whole of the city of David, the blackest of black nights is shrouding the terror-stricken soul of the traitor Judas. He has sold his Master, who even now is on His way to death. And up from the crushing knowledge of his tremendous guilt mount the dense clouds of fear, shattered by the thunderbolts of the wrath of an outraged God. All hell is shrieking for the traitor's soul. And he will not think of the sweet voice of the Master, who called him friend even in the hour of betrayal, or he thinks of Him only to increase the overwhelming burden of his own unspeakable crime. He closes the gates of heaven against himself, and he sinks down into the bottomless abyss of despair.

And the end? Look at the gruesome sight of a limp body, dangling at the halter's end from the limb of a tree. See the ghastly burden swaying, swaying with the passing winds. Gaze on the face distorted with the struggle of violent death and on the eyes

glaring with sightless orbs at the reproach which will never die. Oh, the fearful contrast between this sight and that of Peter at the feet of Christ's Mother! Hope brought Peter back to Christ: the loss of hope led the traitor Judas to despair and to his endless doom. So true is it that hope is necessary for repentance.

Hope is also urgently necessary for the conduct of life. It is not enough for us to get away from evil and to come to God: we must, besides, stay with Him and arrive at last at our eternal destiny of joy. Now, it is by hope that we tend to our heavenly home. The gift of final perseverance in the friendship of God is a something to which we cannot lay a claim under the title of justice. It is a boon for which we must pray. We beg for it when we say to God, "Thy Kingdom come!" We petition for it when we plead with our blessed Mother Mary to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Yes, we must pray, or we shall not come safely through the dangers of a life which is a warfare upon earth. Now, without hope there can

be no prayer which will mount to the throne of God; for, prayer without the calm, confiding trust of hope is no prayer at all and is almost an insult to the mercy of the Father.

Hope must be our comrade on our way through life, no matter how far we advance in holiness and perfection. "And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." [1] Yes, charity is the greatest of the three; but faith and hope must *remain*. We can never do without them, until faith is swallowed up in vision and hope is merged into the fruition of what we longed for. And even though with Paul we should mount to such an excess of charity as to wish to be anathema for our brethren,[2] yet with the same heroic lover of Christ we must always cling to hope, and say: "I press towards the mark, to the *prize* of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded." [3]

For a figure of hope, in so far as its in-

[1] I Cor. xiii, 13.
[2] Cf. Rom. ix, 3.
[3] Phil. iii, 14, 15.

fluence in the matter of repentance is concerned, we need look no farther than the two pictures which we have gazed upon in the case of Peter and Judas. For its power in regard to the noble conduct of life through all our days, and especially when the sun is hidden behind the clouds of adversity, we may take as a type holy Job. True, he is usually put before us as the type of patience; but it was hope that was the basis of his patience.

We need not search into the details of his life: the larger outlines are all sufficient for our purpose.[1] He was a great man of the people of the East, perhaps an Aramean of the land of Hus. Rich he was in flocks and herds, and many dependents did his bidding. Children too he had, seven sons and three daughters; but they were not an unalloyed blessing, since their lives often pained the religious soul of their father. Though he was not of the chosen people of God, he was a good and religious man; and in Scripture the praise is recorded of him

[1] For a judicious and illuminating account, see *Cath. Encycl.* s. v. "Job."

that he "was simple and upright, and fearing God and avoiding evil." [1]

We behold this true man peaceful in his simple magnificence, glad in the esteem of his friends, pleasing in the sight of God. Then, by the permission of God, a veritable tempest of misfortunes strikes him and he is subjected to trial after trial, any one of which would have been enough to break the spirit of a weaker man.

His flocks and herds are killed or driven off by the enemy; and he endures it. His children are destroyed by a whirlwind from the desert; and, though pierced to the center of his being, he bows his sorrowing heart before the majesty of God. He is stricken "with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of the foot even to the top of his head"; [2] and in solitary desolation he bears up under the calamity. His wife turns against him, reproaches him with his simplicity, taunts him, and urges him to speak against the Most High; and he falters not in his trust in God.

[1] Job i, 1.
[2] ii, 7.

Then comes the hardest of all his trials, namely, the doubtful and captious consolation offered by his friends, who really tempt him as they offer solace. In the greatness of his sorrow and in answer to their charges and false comfortings Job is at first overwhelmed by the depth of his woe and can hardly glimpse the brightness which the future holds. All is black and cheerless. But, sometime and somehow God will provide, and still will he trust in Him.[1] Then his vision clears and his hope rises to the lofty height of his sublime declaration of the joys which will be his in the life to come.[2] At length the trial is past: Satan is confounded: Jahve commends the innocence of Job and restores him to a prosperity greater far than that from which he had allowed His servant to be cast down.

Such was Job, the model of patience. But, what was the source of his patience? It was his hope. Look at him a broken man, in utter destitution, in bleeding anguish of heart, in unrelieved dereliction,

[1] xiii, 15.
[2] xix, 23 ff.

like some wounded beast that has crawled away from the sight of men to die alone in misery. See him a palpitating sore, almost a living death, derided as a fool by her who should have been his helpmate, accused by those who called themselves his friends. And hearken to the words which fall from his lips; for, they tell of the source of his strength. In the midst of his sorrow he says of God: "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him," [1] I will hope in Him. And at the glimpse of what the hereafter holds for him, he exclaims exultingly: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom." [2] Here we see the power imparted by hope for bearing the hard things of life.

And so, we understand that hope is necessary, on the one hand, for salutary repent-

[1] xiii, 15.
[2] xix, 25-27.

ance and, on the other, for the living of such a life as will lead us to our home with God.

Yes, have it, we must; and have it, we can. For, the grounds of this hope of ours are firmer than the rock-ribbed mountains. Our confidence is based upon the infinite goodness and promises of our Almighty Father in heaven, on the merciful loving-kindness of our dear Savior. God knows how to help us; for He is wisdom itself. That divine knowledge of His has fixed the orbits of sun and moon and stars: it has outlined the pathway of all parts of the universe: it goes beyond all this, even to the scrutiny of man's inmost secret thoughts and desires: it goes out over the free wilfulness of His intelligent creatures through the ways of His providence, so that absolutely nothing is hidden from His all-seeing eye. Besides, He is able to help us; for He is omnipotent. "For he spoke and they were made: he commanded and they were created."[1] The whole fabric of creation sprang into being as the result of an act of His effective will: it all depends upon Him

[1] Ps. xxxii, 9.

so absolutely, that all would sink back into the soundless depths of nothingness, were that will to cease for an instant. This will of God's, active and omnipotent, knows no difficulty; because it is as easy for omnipotence to call countless new worlds into existence as it is to paint the lilies of the field or to feed the birds of the air. In addition to all this wisdom and power, God wishes to aid us; for He is goodness illimitable, and from eternity His goodness has brooded over us and has claimed us as His own. And, finally, He has promised to be our stay, if we will but come to him and cling to Him; and His fidelity is as imperishable as Himself.

These are hope's foundations, surely strong enough to bear the brunt of hostile attacks: they are reasons which rest on the very Godhead. And as we look at the lovable and loved Humanity of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the sweetness of His all-enduring, all-sacrificing love for us finds its way into our heart of hearts and steadies our trust in Him.

Can we doubt of His care for us? Not

with His life before us. Every tear from His baby eyes, every yearning of His childhood's exile, every labor of His hard hidden life at Nazareth, every step of His wearied feet during the public ministry, every word from His sacred lips calling the wanderers back to the love of God, every groan of His crushed heart in the shadow of Gethsemani's anguish, every voiceless shudder beneath the tearing scourge, every drop of blood spurting forth from beneath the thorny crown, every pang of the endless hours upon the gibbet of shame with the unspeakable torment of the overwhelming dereliction by the Father, every gasping paroxysm of pain until He yielded up the ghost tells of the boundless love which would win us from our doom and bring us to the love of Him who loved us to the end. Well, indeed, may we say with the Psalmist, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped: let me never be confounded." [1]

And, in fact, if we hope, we shall never be confounded. For, hope not only has a part in the repentance for sin, as we have seen; it not only gently urges us on to prayer

[1] Ps. xxx, 2.

and to earnest effort to gain our heavenly reward: it also gives great strength in bearing the trials and sufferings of this mortal life. What hope did for holy Job, we have considered. It will do the same for us.

Many hard things must come into the lives of all of us; and we cannot avoid them, try as we may. Pain has a spiritual tonic effect upon our souls; and, besides, it has another mission to fulfill. It must mold us to resemblance with our Lord. The brothers and sisters of Christ must be likened to their Elder Brother. He whose life was one of deepest sorrow has traced the pathway which all must tread, whether they will it or not. The cross will cast its shadow over the life of each one. Shrink from it; and it will pursue. Fear it; and it will grow more terrible. Cast it away; and another, more grievous, will be laid upon galled shoulders and bleeding hearts. But, welcome it with patience, if not with love; and it will become a sweet support and a treasure beyond the riches of earth.

Now, whilst love for our Crucified Leader

is the strongest of all motives for thus welcoming the cross, hope too has its own distinctive power in the same direction. With St. Paul all of us may say: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"; [1] but "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us"; [2] "for that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." [3]

The solution of the problem of evil in the world, together with the understanding of the inequality of the distribution of the good things of this life, is hidden from us in its details. We know, indeed, that all, bitter and sweet, good and evil (except where evil means sin, which is *not* God's handiwork, though tolerated in His world)—all comes from God's love for His dear ones and tends to their greater advantage; and we are certain that all will be plain after the

[1] I Cor. xv, 19.
[2] Rom. viii, 18.
[3] II Cor. iv, 17.

final reckoning. And, though we do not now see all the details of God's all-wise plan (and in honest humility we must confess that we do not), we can securely trust His love.

It has just been said that everything comes from the love of God. Yet that statement must be modified, except in so far as it refers to the *permissive* will of God, which can draw good out of evil. Much of the misery of life comes, not from the love of God, but from the injustice and malice of men. The grinding down of the poor to the degradation of pauperism by injustice of contract, by enforced starvation, by the blunting of the powers of soul and body, comes from the greed of men, and not from the justice or the love of God.

Sane legislation may do something to curb human depravity in its excesses; and such legislation should be zealously forwarded and enthusiastically welcomed. The lawful efforts of strong association may do more, by extorting some consideration for the oppressed from the tyrants whose biggest motive is self-interest; and may the

weak continue in their endeavors for self-help under the blessing of Mother Church, whilst at the same time they guard themselves against attempting an equally galling tyranny! A return to the deep realities of religion may do a great deal; it is, in very truth, the mightiest means of all for attaining lasting betterment. Yes, all of these means may and will help to an amelioration of a sad condition of affairs. But, as long as the condition lasts (and to some degree it will always be found to exist), the surest salvation for the oppressed is to look up from an unjust earth to a benign heaven, from the infamous hatred of men to the sweet majesty and love of God, from the heart-breakings of this world to the thrilling joys of life everlasting.

The condition of things which makes for so much sorrow here below, especially in the ruthless war between the blind fury of capital and the reckless tyranny of labor, has come about as the result of many causes. It has come because men have forgotten the love for God and man. It has come because men have cast away the righteous fear of

the just Judge. But it has come also because men have torn themselves away from the benign influence of hope.

They are so bound up with the things of earth, that they scorn, if they do not deny, a heaven above. Here below in this world of the senses they have placed their heaven, and they have made material welfare the sole object of their activity. And, after all, in view of their antecedents, what wonder is it? If the fear of God is gone, and with it the dread of an eternal retribution; if hope for the rewards of a loving Father has faded away; what wonder that this world of ours should become the battle ground of higher brutes? What wonder that strength alone rules the conflict? What wonder that the weak are crowded out and trampled upon in the struggle for existence? If eternal heaven and everlasting hell are put away from the thoughts of men, what wonder that they should try to make their heaven here and should succeed in making a hell for so many?

This spirit of materialism, which bounds the gaze of men by the horizon of earth, is

diametrically opposed to the spirit of hope. It was one of the causes (perhaps the chief cause) of the terrible calamity of almost universal war which wasted the manhood, yes, and the womanhood and childhood of half a world. The late beloved Pontiff, Benedict XV, pointed this out in his first encyclical. With striking clearness of vision he assigned four disorders as being back of the terrible scourge, namely: want of mutual love; contempt for authority; injustice of class against class; and the making of material welfare the sole object of human activity. The first of these ruinous forces comes from the lack of the spirit of charity; the second is closely connected with the loss of faith; the third results from the exclusion of the fear of God; and the fourth is caused and aggravated by getting away from the influence of hope.

Would that, in those evil days, the shock of realization had driven men back to the true appreciation of the real value of things! But it did not. Would that they might awake to-day to the knowledge of where

their true interest lies! We must live and work in the world, but not for the world. We must fulfill our duties even with regard to temporal concerns, especially with reference to those who may be dependent upon us; but we must fix our eyes upon a goal beyond the temporal and material.

Our true home is not here. We are but passing through this world on a pilgrimage of war. The war is not against our fellows, though many make it precisely that. It is a war against our own unworthy inclinations, against the onsets of evil, against "the spirits of wickedness in the high places."[1] It is a war against the too great lure of riches and pleasures and honors. These last may be well enough in their place, provided our hearts are not altogether engrossed with them. Yet these same riches and pleasures and honors are terribly dangerous because of their power to woo and win our poor, weak hearts to earth.

We were not made for them. We were made for God and for the enjoyment of end-

[1] Ephes. vi, 12.

less happiness in the heavenly home of our Father. That is our destiny, which we must work for and fight for and suffer for and, if need be, die for. Faith goes before us with the beacon of truth: holy fear of God's just judgments will warn us away from the snare of danger and of evil: hope will urge us on with the appreciation of things which are of everlasting worth.

As the sacred tomb of Christ was the blessed object which called the Crusaders across land and sea to battle in the heroism of a great cause, so should the home of the living Christ, waiting for us in His Father's house where there are many mansions prepared for His loyal followers, call to us across the distance of earth from heaven, across the valley of the years reaching out to the immovable mountain of eternity. Therefore, as St. Paul urges us, "let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised. . . . Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward. For patience is necessary for you," and it comes

from hope; "that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise. For yet a little and a very little while, and he that is to come, will come, and will not delay."[1]

[1] Heb. x, 23, 35-37.

CHAPTER V

MARY—LOVE

Faith with repentance, based on fear and hope, general and ordinary preparation for justification. Beginning of love already contained in this preparation. After this, life through sacrament. Extraordinary and particular economy of grace brings sanctification by love of charity.—Man's need of a friend; most of all, of a divine Friend. Charity founds this friendship.—Nature of charity: benevolence. Sublime in unselfishness, but not beyond us; easy. God's gifts evoke gratitude and gratitude mounts to love. Christ's call to hearts.—Mary, type of love of charity. Two scenes in her life as examples.—Effects: source of perfect sorrow; motive of great deeds for God and man; healing for wounds of world.

When by faith one has entered the realm of the supernatural, when by fear of God's just judgments and by hope in His infinite mercy one has been drawn away from the evil of transgression to the sacred mourning of repentance, he stands on the very borderland of life and all but touches salvation.

In a sense, his preparation for justification is complete.

This preparation has been the subject matter of consideration in the foregoing chapters. In these chapters, however, there has been no formal treatment of love and of its effect. The Council of Trent, which has described for us the successive steps which lead to God, speaks of a certain beginning of the love of God as forming part of the ordinary preparation. For the Holy Synod says that, after faith has been conceived, the adult advances to repentance inasmuch as, understanding himself to be a sinner, he is struck with the holy fear of God's judgments, but is lifted up to hope through the consideration of God's merciful goodness, and begins to love God as the source of all justice and holiness.[1] But, this beginning of love is not necessarily the love of charity. It is usually part of that attrition which springs from the fear of hell and the hope of heaven.

One who sorrows for his sin, even with attrition, really and truly detests his sin as

[1] Denz. n. 798.

an offence against God and sincerely wishes to bring upon himself the propitious glance of his Father's forgiveness: and this is a step towards the charity of God. He wishes to observe all the mandates of his sovereign Lord—all without exception, and therefore also the first and greatest of all commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God": and thus the love of God is his by desire and intention. He wishes to come to eternal life and hopes to attain to the enjoyment of his God: and most surely this is a beginning of the love of God.

All this is part of the love of longing or desire, which theologians technically call "the love of concupiscence" without connoting the smallest degree of "passion." Such a love craves the good things of God for man's sake, it is true, but not to the exclusion of God, and without too much difficulty it may mount to a higher plane of unselfish affection towards the God who is not only our own highest good, but is absolute goodness in Himself.

Thus this sorrow for sin, which comes from fear and hope and all the while is

based upon blessed faith; this repentance, technically called attrition, in certain circumstances is the last stage of the process of preparation for justification. In fact, for the adults whose case we are examining, it is God's ordinary and general way of bringing men to Himself.

For, at the presence of this faith and this repentance the sanctifying grace of God, which is the true life of the soul, comes to man through the Sacrament of Baptism in the first instance or through the Sacrament of Penance in the case of later defections from holiness. Christ has made these two sacraments the ordinary and general channels of His grace of forgiveness. He has traced these two paths as the ones which lead to God. And if, through his own choice and his own fault, a man will not avail himself of these means fixed by the Savior and will not walk in the way marked out by Him, he can hope for nothing but the everlasting night of unforgiven sins and the unending death of separation from his God.

Still, besides this general and ordinary

providence, God has an extraordinary and particular economy of grace with regard to human souls. In certain circumstances and according to the dispositions of His good pleasure God will deal with the soul without the mediation of the sacraments—yet always with relation to them, since He does not contradict Himself. In such instances there is still another step of preparation in the way to life. For, where the uplifting of the penitent soul to the embrace of God is not effected by the sacrament, which *is* God's ordinary way, it must be brought about by perfect contrition. This perfect contrition is the sorrow and detestation for sin as an offence against God, as all good in Himself and all worthy of our love: it is the grief which flows forth from charity or the love of God.

So sacred is this love for God through charity, that at the very instant the sinner makes an act of it he is blessed with sanctifying grace, as a consequence of which his sins are blotted out and he is linked to God by the holy bonds of friendship. God Himself has told us so. We hear the words

which the dear Christ addressed to His loved ones at the Last Supper: "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."[1] From the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had leaned upon the breast of the Master and had drunk in love from the throbbing Sacred Heart, we learn that "every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God";[2] for "God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him."[3]

Yes, love does bring us to God. The Supreme Lord might have ordained otherwise, had He so chosen. There is no question here of absolute justice, whereby He *must* give His sanctifying grace to the one who, by His aid, makes an act of love; for, even the sacredness of charity does not offer to God an atonement equal to the dishonor of transgression. Yet, though He might have ordained otherwise, He has ordained things thus; and we can understand how befitting is this decree of His infinite love.

[1] John xiv. 21.
[2] I John iv, 27.
[3] Id. iv, 16.

As St. John Chrysostom says, "As fire, when it sweeps through a forest, wipes out everything in its path; so the burning heat of charity, when it falls upon a soul, bears all before it. . . . Where charity is, all evil is taken away."[1] That is gloriously true. The evil of sin is burned away before the white heat of that fire which the Savior came to cast upon the earth; and up from the lower plane of the human the soul is rapt unto the divine—even unto friendship with its God. To such souls Christ says, as He said to the Apostles at the feast of love: "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends."[2]

Sacred friendship with God! We need the friendship of God. True, man is placed at the very apex of the material creations, lord of the things below and but a little less than the angels. Wonderful he is. As we marvel at the keenness of his sense perceptions, at his power of imagination, at his grasp of intellect, at his strength

[1] Hom. 7 in II Tim., n. 3.
[2] John xv, 15.

of free will, we may, perhaps, fancy that here is one who can stand alone, a mighty giant who can rely on self and who does not need the help of others. But that would be a sad error.

With all his powers and all his capabilities man cannot stand alone. He needs many, many things; and among his most clamorous necessities is the need of a *friend.* He must have some one, knitted to his being by the bonds of love, who may share his efforts and their results. Without a friend he is in a woeful state. Even though he gain the object of heroic struggling, the prize is almost worthless, if there is no loved one with whom to share it. If sorrow and obloquy and failure come upon him and he has no friend to bear part of the burden, the weight of affliction will crush him to despair. And so, without a friend, whether in triumph or defeat, whether in success or failure, man is alone, and the solitariness will close in upon his spirit, will grow narrower and narrower, and will strangle his life in its killing clutches.

No; man is not enough for himself. He

must have someone whom he may love and who will love him. But most of all, he must have his God who will love him and to whom his own craving heart may go out in love. The love of fellow mortals may mean much; but it is not enough to satisfy the human heart.

The bygone races that have dropped into eternity looked in and beyond and above the world for some great one who had a care for them and was more than an iron despot or a cruel task master. He was there and He was loving them. But, because they sought without earnestness and without perseverance and hence missed the knowledge of the God who loves, they gave free rein to passion in the disdain of indifference or the riot of despair. The degradation of their lives was a hopeless cry for a friend in the person of their God.

That longing for perfect happiness which lies at the bottom of every human heart is the yearning, perhaps unconscious, for the only One who is all good. Our hearts are too big to be satisfied by anything less than

the infinite; and all the things of earth must fail to fill the void within us. Distracted as we are by the things of earth, we do not realize how much we need our Maker; but at times, in the midst of a crowded world, we feel a loneliness of soul which would crush us, if we did not have our God. Surely we must have felt it. Certainly we must have been placed in circumstances where earthly friends have dropped away; where it seemed as if in all the world there was no heart that beat for us, that we were outcasts from the whole human race, and that there was no one to lean upon but God. And has it ever happened that by reason of our own casting off of this Lover of ours we had lost even Him? Then truly we were on the cross, and the black clouds of desolation blocked the sunshine of peace: then we knew the bitterness of loneliness. If we ever get away from the distractions of earth, we shall realize often during life, and we shall realize better as death draws near, that we need our God and we need His friendship. "Without a friend thou canst not well live: and if

Jesus be not thy friend above all, thou wilt be exceeding sad and desolate." [1]

By the love of charity this friendship is established between man and his Maker—friendship which implies mutual love, mutual knowledge of that love, mutual interchange of goods, and a certain equality. Sacred beyond all expression is the communication of love between God and man in their friendship. From the Lover divine to the creature of His love—all the gifts in the natural order of body and soul, all the more hallowed supernatural blessings of heavenly worth, together with the participation in the very nature of God through sanctifying grace! On the part of the lowly lover of the eternal Godhead, the external glory which comes from noblest loyalty and the affection which loves God for His own transcendent excellence! A blessed union, which may be perfected more and more as the span of life is lengthened and which will be crowned with unending glory, when the veil has been pierced and the light of faith has brightened into vision.

[1] Imitation of Christ, Bk. ii, c. 8.

It will be of advantage to us to try to get a clearer understanding of this charity, which is so sublime. Our "act of charity," which we make as we say our prayers, tells us what it is. Therein we say that we love God above all things with our whole heart and soul because He is infinitely worthy of love for His amiable and adorable perfections, and that we love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. So, charity is love; but it is love of the noblest and holiest kind.

The reaching forth of our will towards good because it is good for us is a kind of love; but it is not charity. Charity goes forth towards good because it is good for the beloved: it is the love of benevolence; and the mutual love of benevolence is the love of friendship, which makes for the communication of good things between those who greatly love. This charity towards God causes us to rejoice that He is all that He is, and makes us long to confer on Him the only good thing within the gift of our devotedness, namely, the right use of our own liberty according to the divine good pleasure and the bringing of others to the same loy-

alty, unto the greater honor and glory of God—and all for God's sake.

Charity looks away from the littleness of self and up to the transcendent excellence of God. It does not consider its own advantage, although it does cleave to God and does strive to attain unto the real presence and the actual enjoyment of the loved Lord. It urges the soul forward to possess and hold its friend; but this union of affection is the inmost heart of friendship and is desired above all things by the divine Beloved. It makes the soul long for God; yet the acme of the enjoyment of God is to love God for Himself as supremely good in Himself. True it is, indeed, that if God were not our supreme good and the object of our beatitude, we could not love Him as the infinite God; but, he who loves with charity is not concerned with his own emolument.

Still, for all that, charity shall not be without its reward. With deep insight into the secrets of charity St. Bernard says: "Not without reward is God loved, though He ought to be loved without regard to the reward. For true charity cannot be empty-

handed; yet it is not mercenary, since it does not seek its own. It is an affection, not a contract; it is not acquired by a compact, nor does it thus acquire. . . . True love is content with itself. It has a reward, but its reward is the object of its love,"[1] and that is God.

Charity is splendid in its unselfishness, and it drew from the tender Heart of Jesus words of divine commendation. For, when speaking of His glorious ascension, He said to His Apostles: "If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father."[2] And so they would; for, the true lover rejoices at the good of his friend, even though it be, to a degree, his own loss. Christ also praised the charity which spurns itself for the advantage of the one whom it loves: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend."[3] Nay, in the sweetest of all prayers, He taught us to think of our divine Beloved before we think of ourselves, and to say, "Hallowed be thy name," before we

1 De diligendo Deo c. 7, n. 17.
2 John xiv, 28.
3 John xv, 13.

pray for our own needs with the pleading petition, "Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses."

There can be no doubt about the splendid unselfishness of this charity. To some, the very glory of this unselfishness of charity seems to point to its unattainableness as something altogether superhuman. However, it is not beyond the power of the human will strengthened by God's blessed grace.

In fact, if we will but look, we see unselfish love all about us. A mother's love is proverbial for its forgetfulness of self. Unfortunately it cannot be said that the love of every mother is such; for there are some who are so wrapped up with fashion or folly and with the entanglements of selfish ambition, that they never get out of their mean and little selves. But, a true mother will labor for her loved ones; she will suffer for them; if need be, she will starve for them. Through the darkness of the weary night she will hover near the sick-bed, praying in the gray dawn for the object of her devotion; she will be forgetful of rest, of food, of

all save the pale, pinched face upon the pillow. Fatigue and anxiety may write their story in the dark lines beneath her own eyes and in the strained look upon her own features; but the story is that of the unselfishness of true love.

The love of a real friend is likewise free from the littleness of selfishness. The devotion of a true patriot looks beyond his own advantage to the welfare of his country. The loyalty of every great soul to a noble ideal reaches out beyond the confines of egotism to the object of his love. And so, too, when there is question of loving God for Himself, it is not at all beyond our power to look away from self and up to Him.

Again, our ability to compass this noble love for God is patent from the fact that this very love is commanded by God Himself. Now, God may and does demand high things, but never what is impossible. And His mandate is that we should love the Lord our God with our whole heart and soul and with all our strength and with all our mind.[1] And such love is the love of charity, whereby

[1] Cf. Luke x, 27; Deut. vi, 5.

we must love God even though there should be no other cause for our affection in His regard than this, that He is the Lord our God.

Another reason why this love of God for His own sake is not beyond us is, that it is not required that this yearning for God should exist in the highest degree of intensity. That were impossible. Besides, the required degree could never be determined nor could it ever remain constant. The glow of charity may be increased all through our days, and, please God! it will be, as it was in the hearts of God's saints whom we are to emulate. Still, the degree of intensity does not fall within the command to love: it is the deliberate appreciation of God's supreme goodness before all things that must always be in our inmost heart.

Furthermore, the love of God for His own sake does not exclude from our souls any and all thought of self. It only means that we must go beyond self and must reach up to Him. We must love God for our own sake; we are obliged to tend to Him with the love of desire. Why? Because we must hope in Him; and hope is nothing more nor less

than love for God because He is good to us. Hence, to think of excluding the consideration of our own true advantage from our love of God for His own blessed self would be to weigh the possibility of having true charity for God without hope in Him. And that were as senseless as to imagine that we could have either hope or charity without the faith which is the foundation of all else. No; God is, and wills to be, at once our own highest good and supremely good in Himself: and therefore we may and we must love Him under both aspects. The one love is hope; the other, charity. Both are bound together to the advantage of ourselves and to the everlasting glory of God.

Not only is this love of charity not beyond the power of our soul, aided by the grace of God; it is also comparatively easy. Surely it is quite in accord with genuine nobility of heart to love those who have showered benefits upon us. And without doubt God has done that: He is our greatest benefactor. The thought of His countless gifts makes it easy for us to entertain towards Him deep sentiments of gratitude; and from the ful-

ness of gratitude up to the height of the love of charity is a step both easy and natural.

He gave us all that we have and all that we are; and He gave it to us out of the depths of His infinite longing for our nearness and our love. This old earth with its beauty and grandeur is a part of His prodigality. With its wealth of things material, with its beauty of hill and valley and forest and stream and mountain peaks and boundless ocean, it is only the possession, the joy, the passing home of the ruler of the material creation. In man himself every faculty of soul and body is not only a reason for his service of the Lord God; each of them is, as well, a love token from the great Lover of mankind.

That is the mystery which is back of so many others—God's love for us. Forever and forever God was infinitely happy in the eternal joy of being, that is Himself. He needed no creature's love; for, such love could add nothing to His own infinite satisfaction in Himself. Yet, though He needed not the love of man, He longed for it, as no human heart ever hungered for human love.

And out of the abyss of nothingness His almighty fiat called forth the world of men, that He might love them and that they might love Him. Do we prize our lives and our faculties and our capabilities for action and for accomplishment? Then, our hearts must grow big with gratitude towards our God who gave us ourselves.

The gifts of nature were enough and more than enough for man: they were not enough for the immensity of the overwhelming love with which God cherished His dear ones. With their natural powers and with their natural destiny men were not near enough to the boundless affection of the Eternal; for, they could never come nearer to Him than servants or slaves can approach their master. So, the great Lover lifted them up to His own divine life. He gave them the sanctifying grace which made them partakers of His own nature, with the destiny of looking face to face upon the unveiled splendor of the Deity in the knowledge which belongs to the Godhead. Theirs was to be the heritage of children, and not the portion of mere servants who are paid their dole for service.

Do we value the glorious destiny which is to be ours, provided we are faithful to our Father? Do we esteem the measureless happiness which is kept for us in the home where there are many mansions for the sons and daughters of God? Then again, our hearts must go out to Him who has so loved us.

When the gift of God was spurned by the unfaithfulness of our guilty first parents; when, by our own repeated personal transgressions, destruction was made damnation doubly damned; He would not let us go, but He gave Himself for us. "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son";[1] and that Son of God loved us and delivered Himself for us.[2] Here, of a truth, was the greatest gift of all.

From the gifts of God which call for gratitude, it is not hard to rise higher, if we will but think seriously. Can we be so dull and so senseless as to be satisfied merely with having, and give never a thought to the source of our blessings? That were

[1] John iii, 16.
[2] Cf. Ephes. v, 2.

disgracefully unworthy of the nobility of the nature which God has given us. Rather, we should mount up from the gifts of the Lover to the love of the Giver. We should find in His favors, which are only the coverings of His affection for us, the throbbing love which showered them upon us; and we should love that goodness for itself. And that is the love of charity.

When we look to the love of Christ, who became our Brother and our Victim, we are harder than flint, if we do not burn with love for Him, not only for what He has done for us, but for what He is in Himself. And that, too, is the love of charity.

Yes, if creation should make us love God, what of redemption? In the first, God gave us ourselves; in the second, He gave us Himself. He bought us back from doom—and at what a cost! It cost Him all that men hold dear. It cost Him the life of poverty and obscurity and weariness and labor and suffering which stretched from the hard crib of Bethlehem to the harder cross of Calvary. We can sound the depths of the soundless sea more easily than we can

measure the greatness of His all-sacrificing love. It is as broad as heaven and as vast as the starry depths. We cannot begin to grasp its fulness, until we can count each sigh of His infancy and each longing of His exile; until we can reckon each throbbing pulsation of His heart through the barren days of His ministry and the awful hours of His abandonment; until we can number each drop of His precious blood, that trickled from His anguished body in Gethsemani, that spurted from His torn veins in the scourging and the crowning with thorns, that flowed from His pierced hands and feet upon the reddened rood, even to the last drop that oozed from His riven heart as the soldier's spear opened His sacred side. For, the burden of the message of each of these is, "He loved me and delivered himself for me." [1]

Oh, that blessed, loving, lovable, Incarnate God of ours! He took our human nature upon Himself and became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. This He did, not only that He might offer up atonement for

[1] Gal. ii, 20.

us, but also that the loveliness and goodness of the invisible Godhead might be placed before us in visible form and might woo our hard hearts to love. As we ponder on His endless love for us, can we be mean enough to keep our eyes forever fixed upon our little selves and think only of our own advantage? Shall we not rather look at His goodness as shown forth in His longing for us and give Him all the love of our poor souls? From creatures to God, and, most of all, from the beneficence of our divine Redeemer and Lover to the love of the Father and the Holy Spirit—this is the way to charity divine.

And it becomes all the easier when we realize that this love of God for us is not a something that is past and gone, not a something vague and impersonal, but ever thrillingly present and wondrously personal. We are in the very arms of our Father, who is with us in His omnipresence and guards us by His special providence. The dear Christ has not lost thought for us; but, at the right hand of the Father, He is forever making intercession for us, and, in the

tabernacle, He abides with us day and night, pleading for His brothers and sisters, even when they (God help them!) are forgetful of His undying love. Oh, if the truth and beauty and goodness and love of earth can hold these hearts of ours as they can and do, why, in love's name, cannot the infinite truth and beauty and goodness and love of our God lift us out of ourselves and make us more worthy of Him!

It will make us more worthy of Him, if we come to love Him; for, charity is the noblest of all the virtues. It is inseparably united with the sanctifying grace of God, and, thus united, is the very soul of noble endeavor and the principle of supernatural merit in the sight of God. It will last forever as the spirit which belongs not only to earth, but to the kingdom of God's blissful glory, almost the atmosphere of our heavenly country.

Charity, then, is the most sacred source of repentance, the hallowed font of sorrowing love. Besides, it is the glorious heritage of the children of God through all their

days here below and through the endless ages of eternity.

And what type shall we take to show forth the grandeur of this glowing charity? Surely the type should be superb, since charity is the splendid crown of all the other virtues. And such a type we have, a type that is the noblest of all the sacred figures as well of God's old dispensation as of the new. We find this type in one who is "the glory of Jerusalem and the joy of Israel"; [1] in one who unites the great things of both testaments—in the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

She is the refulgent exemplar of all holiness. In an especial manner, too, she is the model of the love of charity for God and man. It must be confessed, there is a strong temptation to enlarge upon the consideration of her wonderful prerogatives and upon the unexampled pattern of all sacredness which she shows to the world. Yet, though her children's love for her would be a valid reason for a fuller treatment of this con-

[1] Judith xv, 10.

genial theme, the necessity of not curtailing some other apposite reflections enforces the call for brevity. Hence, we can do no more than look upon one or two instances in her blessed life, which gleam with the brightness of this holy love.

From the very first instant of her life her soul was flooded with the sanctifying grace of God, which always has with it the virtue of supernatural charity, and she was the Immaculate one. According to the designs of God and the capacity of her favored soul, she was "full of grace" and full of charity divine, even from that early dawn of her earthly career; and both grace and charity grew constantly during all the conscious moments of the life of the little Maid of Nazareth.

Oh, the beauty of Mary's grace-flooded, love-consumed soul, as the angel stood before her with the message of the Incarnation![1] The greatness of Rome, with its pomp of power and its magnificence of empire, could not win the angel's regard. Jerusalem, with its gorgeous temple and

[1] Cf. Luke i, 26-38.

gleaming palaces, he passed by. It was to the little maid of despised Nazareth that he came. After his salutation and his reassurance of her favor with God, he told her that she was to conceive and to bring forth a Son, the Only-Begotten of the Father before time began, that she was destined by the Most High to be the Mother of God.

And then the angel waited for the answer that she would give. All the world waited for that answer. The great God Himself waited for it. For, God would not force the will of His beloved: He would have no consent from her but one that was altogether free. Now, it was only her heroic love for God and man that made her consent to accept the stupendous dignity that was offered to her.

Does this statement sound strange? It is strange only to the ears of thoughtlessness. For, what would that consent mean? It would indeed mean that she would become the Mother of God. Yes; but the Mother of the Man of sorrows, the Mother of the Victim of the world. And it seems to me that she knew all this. She knew the

Scriptures with a penetrating knowledge such as no other mere mortal ever had. Moreover, it appears to be beyond all doubt that God laid bare before her gaze whatever the future held in her regard. His very love often makes our tender Lord hide the future from the weakness of such as we are: it was not necessary for Him to hide it from "the valiant woman" that Mary was.

And so, I think, she knew that her consent would bring the sweet days of the tenderness of Bethlehem and Nazareth, but would lead her to the horrors of the crushing sorrow of Calvary. She knew that she would hold the Baby Christ in her arms and that she could call Him all her own; but, that she would one day stand beneath the blood-stained cross and see her Son expire. So, it was with the heroism of martyr-love for God and man that she said in words soft as angel music: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."[1] And those words sound strangely like the words which forced themselves from the pale and trembling lips of the Christ in

[1] V. 38.

the shadows of Gethsemani, "Father . . . not my will, but thine be done."[1] Yes, it was the sublimity of love that made Mary speak the fiat of her humility, which was answered by the fiat of God's omnipotence—"and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us."[2]

And now we pass across the stretch of years which hold the story of unselfish love and we stand with Mary, where she had stood in vision when she spoke to the angel the words of love's submission. We stand with her at the foot of the cross of the dying Savior. She was with Him at the beginning of His mortal career: she is with Him at the consummation of the work which the Father had given Him to do; for, love unites her always with the Victim of mankind. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother."[3]

She knows the bitterness of the sacrifice which she has to offer; and it is love that makes her stronger than the sharpness of the sword of sorrow which pierces her very

[1] Luke xxii, 42.
[2] John i, 14.
[3] John xix, 25.

soul. Through the blackness of the unnatural night which has settled down on Golgotha, she gazes on that suffering form nailed to hard wood. Those eyes of His, filled with tears and clotted blood, once looked into her own with the smiles of childhood in the days gone by. That thorn-crowned head was often pillowed upon her breast. Those torn hands had often caressed her cheeks in the hours of Bethlehem and Egypt and Nazareth. Those parched and bruised lips, all swollen and bleeding, had called her by the sweet and endearing name of "Mother."

Oh, Father of mercy! why had men hated Him so? Why had they made Him so pitiable an object, that it requires all a mother's love to pierce the veil and to see in that mangled form the one who was "'beautiful above the sons of men"?[1]

She hears His words of love and mercy for all. She is given to the disciple whom Jesus loves. She tastes the unspeakable bitterness of the fearful agony which wrings from the desolate soul of the dying Christ

[1] Ps. xliv, 3.

the most awful words of those awful hours, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[1] She sees the thorn-crowned head sink forward on the gashed breast, as the great High Priest of mankind offers up the sacrifice which redeems the world. And there at the foot of the cross she rises to the sublimity of more than martyr heroism, and she offers her Son to the Father for the satisfaction of divine justice and for the reconciliation of mankind with God.

And the shadows deepen and all is still. In the darkness beneath the cross we see a broken-hearted mother holding in her arms the lifeless body which has been reverently taken down from the blood-soaked rood. She is the Queen of Martyrs. And through the black gloom of Calvary there gleams the glory of the love for God and man that is stronger than death.

In view of the appealing force of the Blessed Mother's example of all-embracing love, there is little need to dwell in special detail upon the effects which charity accomplishes and little need to urge the faithful

[1] Matt. xxvii, 46.

servants of God to its holy practice. In Mary this charity did not, indeed, turn to sorrow for her sins against God; for, sin had no part in her blessed life. Conceived immaculate, she bore the robe of innocence unspotted even to the day when God took her home in the ravishing glory of her Assumption. With us, however, the love of charity may be (and God grant it will be!) the source of a contrition which will abide with us all through the days of our pilgrimage; for we who have sinned should forever live in the peaceful shade of loving sorrow and sorrowing love. Yet, apart from its relation to the sins of the past, the love of charity ought to rule all our dealings with God and with our fellowmen.

As to God, charity will make us give to Him the holocaust of loyal service and devotedness. It will keep us from the treason of mortal sin. It will clarify and rectify our view with regard to venial transgressions and will make us deem them despicable failings from duty, as they are, and not mere peccadilloes, as the thoughtless consider them to be. After all, this avoidance of sin,

mortal and venial, is the true sign and test of love, as the God-Man told us when He said: "If you love me, keep my commandments." [1]

Yes, if we love Him, we shall not be guilty of the base ingratitude, the mad folly, the unspeakable degradation, which prefers an unjust gain, an ill-bought honor, a vicious lustful satisfaction to the good pleasure of the great God who is worthy of all love for His amiable and adorable perfections. This loyalty of service is the essence of the true love of God which will ever grow until we come to be no strangers before His throne of majesty in heaven or before the throne of His lowly mercy in the tabernacle; until we think of our dear God and for Him; until His interests have become our interests, and each of us can say with St. Paul, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." [2]

As for our fellowmen, charity will make us love them "in deed, and in truth." [3] To do no more than to sketch the application

[1] John xiv, 15.
[2] Gal. ii, 20.
[3] I John iii, 18.

of the love of charity for our fellows would take too long, since it would be to outline a life of noble heroism, which would make all things right. For, "he that loveth his neighbor, hath fulfilled the law"[1] of loving God above all things and his neighbor as himself. Charity will safeguard the rights of justice and will go beyond all this with the sweetness of love. It will concern itself with the spiritual welfare of the neighbor and with the material betterment of the lot of those who are in distress—and all this according to the capabilities and the opportunities of each. It will go out to social service, which is a cold and heartless thing of scientific lifelessness until charity has breathed its spirit into the dead bones. It will make each one remember that he is his brother's or his sister's keeper.

In the preceding chapters reference has been made to the terrible evils which were decimating the earth such a short while ago and which are working their dreadful results to-day. These evils are terrifying and heart-breaking. But, they would all dis-

[1] Rom. xiii, 8.

appear, if charity would reign in the souls of men. Peace was longed for in war; but peace, deep and true and lasting, was not obtained when the cannons stopped roaring and the shrapnel shells ceased shrieking. Such peace must be built on charity. For, the Prince of peace, who came to bring men the peace which the world cannot give, built the stones of the sacred temple of peace upon the foundation of love; and it can have no other sound basis.

In his first encyclical, at the beginning of the great war, Benedict XV looked beneath the surface of things and saw the source of the evils which were laying waste the world; and he told men of the four great wrongs which were, and are, killing society: namely, the growing coldness of men to men and to God and the dying out of charity; contempt for authority; antagonism between the classes; and the unbridled desire for temporal goods. The first in order of these causes of disorder is the lack of charity; and from this cause flow, in great measure, the other three. For, exaggerated self-love, which waxes strong from the de-

crease of charity, leads to the false independence which throws defiance in the face of authority; false independence and self-centered egoism lead to the clash between the classes, which, after forgetting the charity due to the children of God, scorns the just rights of human nature; and the cutting away from the love for God and for the dear ones of God lets men sink down into the baseness that can see no farther than the horizon of time and can cherish only those goods which are of the earth earthy. And thus, the entire loss or the cooling down of charity is only too truly the beginning of all evils.

God help the world! There is more than enough of mawkish sentimentality. There is a full supply of interested regard for others because of personal advantage. There is a gruesome riot of the jungle-love of human beasts. But, the true wishing well to others as to God's children, the procuring for them of the good things which will stand the test of fire and will endure unto everlasting—this real Christ-like

charity does not burn with the warmth which the loving heart of the Savior longs for.

And what is the way out of the abyss? There is but one which will be of real and lasting worth—and that is the way of Christian charity. Therefore, let us hearken to the voice of Peter, ever sounding in the ears of men. Let us listen to the voice that has been silenced by death, but which still speaks across the borderland, the voice of the beloved Pius X, whose motto and whose aim was "To renew all things in Christ!" Let us give ear to that other voice that is stilled, that of Benedict XV, who wished the special mark of his war-saddened pontificate to be "to make the charity of Jesus Christ reign anew amongst men." Let us do what we can to bring about the realization of the hope that glows ardent in the zealous soul of Pius XI, now gloriously reigning; for, his hope is the same as that of his two revered predecessors.

This is an object worthy of the noblest efforts of the noblest souls. It is the object

which we should do our utmost best to further for our own true good, for the real welfare of our fellowmen, and for the everlasting glory of the God of love.

CHAPTER VI

THE SYNAGOGUE—THE CHURCH

Purpose of considerations recalled: for others; for selves. All our sufficiency from Christ: no one ever saved without Him. "Economy of preparation" and "economy of realization": also two phases of faith in Christ: the Synagogue and the Church.—Church of Old Law, type. Law of nature. Falling away of nations. God's providence, preparing for Mosaic Law.—The Synagogue. Its character: nation and church: power of teaching, sanctifying, ruling. Its history: its limitations.—Church of New Law, realization. Institution. Nature: its mission. Marks. Identification: Catholic Church. Necessity of Church. Achievements.—Application and conclusion.

In the foregoing chapters we have studied the dispositions which, in adults, are preparatory to the justification which constitutes holiness and the true life of the soul. If, as it is to be hoped we have done, we have hallowed our considerations with humble prayer, the truths upon which we have

dwelt have gone down into the depths of our souls. Then and only then can they actively influence our own lives in all details, even the smallest. That they should thus effectively work to the good of souls is the ambition which should have animated us from the beginning. For, our purpose was not merely speculative. It was intensely practical, since it was to grasp the ways of God in man's regard.

If this grasp of the ways of God has been attained, we shall be able in our humble way to help those of our fellows who are less blessed than we are and to bring them nearer to the Kingdom of God, whilst, at the same time, we ourselves will be aided in keeping near to God and in coming ever closer to Him. For, it must never be forgotten that the same dispositions which prepare the soul to come to God and to share in His divine life keep the soul near to Him and hold it fast in the bonds of holy friendship.

We know that all our sufficiency is from God and that all hope of salvation is from Jesus Christ. From the day when the first

sin broke the harmony of God's world and crossed the designs of divine love, the one means of reinstatement in the glory which was lost has ever been the application of the merits of Christ the Redeemer—and we have studied the manner of preparation for that application.

No one has ever come to salvation save through the Christ. No one has ever obtained the sanctifying grace of God except by union with Jesus. And, in God's ordinary providence, no adult has ever attained to this union of grace with the Redeemer save along the pathway where lie the Milestones on the Way to Life. Christ has been the object of at least the implicit faith and worship of all those who from the beginning have had part with God: He is and will be the same with regard to all those who will have part with Him until time broadens out into eternity.

Whether in the economy of preparation and type or in the economy of perfection and realization no one could or can be united with Christ the Redeemer without at least implicit faith in Him. These terms,

"the economy of preparation" and "the economy of realization," bring us to the subject of the present chapter.

It might, indeed, appear that the preceding chapters have rounded out the circle of our inquiries and that the purpose contemplated at the outset has been accomplished. For, we have studied the qualities that lead one to the divine life of which sanctifying grace is the principle, the very soul. These are: first of all, faith; and then the repentance which springs from holy fear of God's just judgments, from hope in His loving kindness, from at least the beginning of love, or, better still, from the flaming affection of charity. These are the Milestones on the Way to Life, and with the consideration of them our work would seem to be completed.

However, there is yet another series of reflections to be made. As types of the dispositions of soul which lead to the life of grace we have taken characters from the Old Testament. And well we might; for, the whole of the former dispensation of God was a figure and a type of what was to be. In the

Epistle to the Hebrews the inspired writer, after speaking of the temple and the ceremonies and the priesthood of the days of old, says that all this was a type of Christ's priesthood and of its effects: "which is a *parable* of the time present."[1] So it was: in fact, the *whole* of the Old prefigured the New. And, therefore, in conclusion it will be advisable, as well as helpful, to consider the Synagogue and the Church, type and antitype. The Synagogue belongs to "the economy of preparation"; it is the summary of the Old Testament, from which the types were taken in our past reflections. The Church pertains to "the economy of realization"; it is the treasure-house of the divine life to which one is brought by way of the preparatory dispositions that were studied in the preceding chapters.

These same terms, "the economy of preparation" and "the economy of realization," also point to the two phases of faith with regard to Christ, namely, faith in the Redeemer *promised* and faith in the Redeemer *who has come.* Before Christ's ad-

[1] Heb. ix, 9.

vent, faith in Him "who was to be sent"[1] was the foundation of all. Upon this faith sacrifices and ceremonial and institutions were built. Yet then all looked to the future. All was a type of what was to be: all was a guide, a pedagogue leading to the Christ who was to come: all was a shadow of the great reality, a prophecy that was to be fulfilled, a harbinger of a better hope: "for the law brought nothing to perfection, but a bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God."[2] In a word, all that made for uprightness and supernatural holiness had value from the future merits of Jesus Christ, the one and only Redeemer of a perishing race.

Then as at all times, then as well as after Christ's coming, the people of God was made up of all those, and only those, tending to God by the true faith and by the true worship of the Most High. Now, what was and what is the true worship of God, offered to the Lord by those who are united to Him by blessed faith? The answer is that before

[1] Gen. xlix, 10.
[2] Heb. vii, 19.

the coming of Christ the true worship of God was found in the Church of the Old Law, and after His advent, in the Church of Jesus Christ.

In a wide sense, the Church of God at any period may be said to be the gathering together of all who are united by the true faith and the true supernatural worship of God, and who are thus bound to one another and to God. In every stage of the Church of God there must be some teaching power, some ministerial rites of sanctification, some ruling in the realm of the soul. For, without these God's faithful ones are not bound together into one body or association; and, unless there be such a gathering together, there can be no church, even in the widest meaning of the term, since the very word, church or *ecclesia,* denotes a collection or unity of such as are called by God. Besides, the greater the unity and perpetuity and holiness of these elements of teaching and sanctifying and ruling, the more perfect will be the form of the Church of God on earth.

Before Moses received from the Almighty the Law, which bound God's chosen people

into a politico-religious unity, there was no positive divine law, holding men together in a religious society, possessed of determined sacrifices and sanctifying rites. In those olden days of the gray long ago men were under what has been called "the law of nature," and they were bound only by such obligations as flowed forth from the natural relations of man with God and from the supernatural destiny to which man had been elevated.

Still, even then, in a vague way, the future more excellent union of God's chosen ones was already prefigured. For, from the beginning, in the holy patriarchs of the race and the faithful ones of God there were found those who held to the true faith and the true worship of God. Sacrifice and ritual worship, in general, were ordained of God and were practised by His loyal subjects; but God had not as yet prescribed any special form for these sacrifices and rites. The teaching power was practically confined to perpetual tradition with the helping ministry of the patriarchs, aided at times by the extraordinary mission of the prophets.

But, as yet there was no real external organization of God's children into a religious society.[1]

As we look at those long years of spiritual famine, do we appreciate, as we should, the blessed abundance in which God has cast our lives? In those far distant days men had a sufficiency of God's grace to be loyal to faith and to lead lives of true worship and of prayerful sanctification. But they did not have, as we have, the overflowing superabundance of God's beneficence.

And, more's the pity, they did not correspond with what they had. I am not judging them: their lives speak judgment upon them, and in some instances the wrath of God thundered forth the condemnation of their infidelity. Faith? Worship? Oh, the sad, sad story of a wandering race! They fell away into the darkness of idolatrous superstition. They revelled in filthy rites to their defiled divinities. Almost universally they lost the knowledge of the one true God and groped in the black depths of

[1] Cf. Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, v. n. 452; Franzelin, *De Eccl.* Th. 2, 3.

polytheism. And the stench of their moral degradation rose up to an angered heaven to call down the vengeance of an outraged God.

Then the love of the Father of mercy set aside one people as His own, in order to keep alive among men the true knowledge of God and the promise of Him who was to be sent as a Redeemer. God made this one people His own specially beloved by His pact with Abraham, the father of all believers. He repeated His promises to the other patriarchs—preparing the way for the Mosaic Law.

From on high there came a new hope to the Israelites, oppressed, persecuted, and harassed by the Egyptians. Moses was commissioned to lead them out of the house of bondage and into the land which the Lord would give to them.[1] In the might of heaven this divinely appointed leader broke down the proud opposition of Pharaoh and led God's chosen people on[2]—across the Red Sea,[3] across the desert with its terrors.

[1] Cf. Exod. vi, 13; vii, 1-6.
[2] Cf. Exod. vii–xii.
[3] Cf. Exod. xiv, 21, 22, 29.

With manna from heaven he fed them,[1] he refreshed them with water from the rock;[2] he healed them from the burning death of the serpents' sting.[3] And then, in the midst of the crashing roar of thunder and the blinding flash of lightning around the mountain of Sinai—the terror-stricken people huddling the while at the smoking base of the hill—Moses received from the Almighty the Law, with its moral precepts, its ceremonial rites, and its disciplinary enactments.[4] And the Synagogue was born and began the life which was to lead on to the Christ and His work.

The Synagogue was a nation and a church. It was a society at once religious and civil. But, our concern with it goes only as far as its religious aspect. It was, for that time, the Church of God for His chosen people—and it was holy and sacred. True, it was not resplendent with the sacredness of that which it typified. Yet, in the spirit of its

[1] Cf. Exod. xvi, 4, 35.
[2] Cf. Exod. xvii, 1, 5, 6.
[3] Cf. Num. xxi, 6, 9.
[4] Cf. Exod. xx ff.

institution, it was not the worthless thing which rationalists and infidels make it out to have been; nor was it the helpless formalism which is described by others who seem to think that the best way to extol the grandeur of God's sweetest dispensation of love, the New Testament, is to decry the Church of the Law.

The threefold power of sanctifying and ruling and authoritatively teaching was given to the Synagogue. The worship of the Most High was determined in sacrifices, in sanctifying rites, in ceremonies and solemnities. At first a tabernacle was the only temple; yet it was the abode of the Godhead. And, in order that the visible unity of the Church of Israel might be preserved, the public and solemn sacrificial worship of Jahve was to be offered in one only temple, whether tabernacle or gorgeous pile.[1]

Priests were instituted in hierarchical gradation, as the ministers of this holy worship; and these priests were to judge the people and to rule them in the things that appertained to God. And with the power

[1] Cf. Franzelin l. c.

of ruling in the realm of the soul there was the power of guarding the revelation of God. The ordinary charge of the priestly ministers of the Law did not include the power of infallible declaration of the word of God. That revelation itself was to be added to, as time went on, and this, by the prophets who were sent. And where the ordinary teaching body had departed from the way of undefiled truth, the extraordinary ambassadors of God, with their new message from on high, brought the wanderers back from error.

The Synagogue, endowed with these powers, continued its mission through the years. Its children fell away from their lofty duty, oh, so often! But God's institution was not stained by the faithlessness of these unworthy ones. It remained the gathering of those who, within the elect race, held to the true faith in God, and who worshipped the Lord with the cult which was pleasing to Him—the type of what was to be when the fulness of time had come.

Yet, as has been said, it was far, very far removed from the splendor and sacredness

of what it prefigured. The Synagogue was not only a religious society, but a civil one as well: the Church, which it foreshadowed, whilst *in* the world, was not to be *of* this world. The Synagogue did not of itself confer real, interior sanctification, but gave only legal holiness: the Church was to be the source of such sanctity of soul as made men truly the adoptive children of God. The Synagogue was for the people of Israel alone, whilst the rest of mankind were to come to their Father by the same means as had been at hand through the providence of God before He gave His law to the one nation of His special predilection: the Church was to go beyond the boundaries of country and nation and to unite all mankind in one sacred society under the headship of Christ. The Synagogue, as a figure, was to last only until the reality would come. When the antitype appeared, the type was to cease; when the New Law was promulgated, the Old Dispensation was to pass away. The Church, on the other hand, was to last "all days, even to the consummation

of the world,"[1] when Christ would come again in great power and majesty to judge all men.

We have looked at the type, which was the Synagogue: let us turn to the fulfillment, which is Christ's one, true, Catholic Church.[2]

When the fulness of time was come "the grace of God our Savior . . . appeared to all men . . . who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works."[3] He came to buy us back from evil, to give His revelation, to establish His religion, and to make provision for the safeguard and propagation of His holy doctrine and of His saving grace throughout all the ages to come.

The days of Bethlehem and Egypt and Nazareth passed away. Then the blessed Lord began the weary labors of His public ministry of mercy. He preached the gospel

[1] Matt. xxviii, 20.

[2] For a more complete treatment of the doctrine about the Church, see the author's book "Christ's Masterpiece."

[3] Tit. ii, 11, 14.

of the Kingdom: He drew to His following the first disciples. After a whole night spent in the prayer of God He chose twelve from the disciples, and these twelve He called Apostles.[1]

With a vocation immediately divine these chosen ones were the objects of our Savior's special love and particular fostering care. The twelve were a body apart from the other followers of the Master. They were His constant and cherished companions, in an astounding intimacy of mind and heart. To them He spoke more clearly than to all the rest of His disciples and in unveiled truth instructed them about the Kingdom of God, about the children of the Kingdom, and about the King who was Himself. "The Twelve," the Apostolic College, were sent upon temporary errands of apostolic training and missionary effort.[2] Yet, blessed as they were with a vocation common to them all, there was a great and striking difference between them; for, all of them were not equal. Simon Peter was

[1] Cf. Luke vi, 12-16; Mark iii, 13, 14.
[2] Cf. Luke ix, 1, 2.

to stand forth from his brethren with a dignity and an authority all his own: he was to be closer to the Master than any or all of the rest; for, that was the will of the Christ.

It was in the country near Cæsarea Philippi that Christ asked of the twelve: "Who do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do *you* say that I am?"[1] Quite properly did He expect more from them than from others, since to them had been made known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Then Simon Peter, whom the Lord had marked out from the day of His calling when He had told him that his name would be called Cephas[2] (Peter, the Rock)—Simon Peter, under the inspiration of God, made his glorious profession of faith in the divinity of his Lord. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."[3] "And Jesus answering, said to him:

[1] Matt. xvi, 13-15.
[2] Cf. John i, 42.
[3] Matt. xvi, 16.

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1]

That was Christ's promise; that was the pledged word of the Son of God. Peter was to be the rock, the foundation upon which Christ would build His Church. That Church was to stand firm forever, although the storms would come and the winds would blow and the rain would fall;[2] but it would stand because it would be founded upon the rock. As the foundation, Peter was to be the principle of unity and stability of the insuperable Church of the Christ; and he could be this principle only

[1] Matt. xvi, 17-19.
[2] Cf. Matt. vii, 24, 25.

by the authority which would be able to bind together efficaciously all the living stones of the temple of God. And such authority means "the primacy of jurisdiction," that is, the supreme ruling power over all the members of Christ's Church. Again, Peter was to be the bearer of the keys of the Kingdom of God on earth; and by the transfer of the "keys of the Kingdom" from the Sovereign Christ to him alone, he was to have the delegated dominion of authority from Him who, by right divine, was the Ruler of the City of God. And this, too, is "the primacy of jurisdiction."

We gaze across the chasm of the Passion to the glory of the Risen Lord and by the side of the Sea of Tiberias we behold the Savior in company with some of His Apostles after their night of fruitless labor. There in the morning light bursting across the waters of the inland sea, we look upon the scene of sweet intimacy between those hallowed ones. And there, after the threefold questioning, which brought forth the triple protestation of Peter's love for his

Lord, the Master made him the shepherd of his flock. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?—Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.—Feed my lambs: feed my sheep."[1] Thus Jesus Christ fulfilled the promise uttered at Cæsarea Philippi: He made the lowly Galilean fisherman the shepherd of His whole flock, the head of the Apostles and of all His disciples, the ruler of His universal Church.

Such was the position of Peter among "the Twelve." Those who do not see it, do not know the institution of the Master: those who refuse to accept it, even though their refusal be guiltless because of their ignorance, refuse to accept the will of the Christ, who founded His Church *as He willed to found it* and not as men have dreamed that He ought to have founded it.

Christ had solemnly pledged Himself to give the power of ruling the souls of men to the rest of "the Twelve," but in conjunction with Peter. The power of binding and loosing, the authority of jurisdiction

[1] Cf. John xxi, 15-17.

in the realm of the soul was to be committed to them too, but with and under Peter.[1] To the Twelve with Peter the great High Priest gave the power of offering in memory of Himself the mysterious sacrifice of the New Law, the oblation of the body and blood of the world's Victim.[2] To them He gave the power of sacramental ministration for the sanctification of the souls of men.[3]

And then, before He ascended to His glory at the right hand of the Father, He gave to these chosen ones, thus prepared and thus united under Peter, their mission and commission to mankind. On the mountain of Galilee the Christ spoke to them the words which are living yet in their undying efficacy and which will live on until time shall be no more: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am

[1] Cf. Matt. xviii, 17, 18.
[2] Cf. Luke xxii, 19.
[3] Cf. Matt. xxviii, 19; Luke xxii, 19; John xx, 22, 23.

with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[1]

This is their commission to teach all the sons of men, to teach authoritatively and with infallibly true utterance, and to teach thus with the sanction of eternal life or eternal damnation upon the acceptance or the guilty rejection of their words. For, the same Christ, to whom all power was given in heaven and in earth and who made the Twelve partakers of that power, said: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[2]

This, then, is Christ's Church, as its Founder made it. It is a visible organization of Christ's Apostles under Peter, their chief: it is sent to all the nations of the earth to bring all men to the unity of faith and worship and religious government, to the end that Christ's religion might be preserved and propagated and might bring men to holiness here below and finally lead them

[1] Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.
[2] Mark xvi, 15, 16.

to the eternal blessedness of joy everlasting. His Church was not, and was not to be, an isolated union of each individual soul with God, but a corporate communion with the Lord.

And this it was to be unto the end. The mission given to the Apostles was to last beyond the term of their mortal existence. In them, living forever in their successors, it was to last until the consummation of the world, with the successful outcome of their labors guaranteed by the Christ, who would be with them [1] and who would send the Holy Spirit to guard them through all days.[2]

In her perpetual mission the Church was ever to be in essentials what her Founder made her. First of all, she was to be one, in such a way that all her children would profess subjection to her one authoritative and infallible utterance of truth and to her one ruling power, which would hold its commission from the Christ. At the same time, she was to possess forever the means of sanctifying men by sacred doctrine and by

[1] Cf. Matt. xxviii, 20.
[2] Cf. John xiv, 16, 17.

saving sway and especially by the sacramental rites, bearing the streams of Christ's precious blood to the souls of men. Among her children she was to have many who would mount to moral nobility, some even to the dazzling heights of heroic holiness, with a constancy and a perpetuity which would go beyond the powers of unaided nature and beyond the attainment of nature, assisted by the ordinary outpouring of grace, so that this holiness, as a moral miracle, would stamp God's approbation upon her brow. Then too, her mission was to reach out beyond the borders of nationality and to bind all men into sacred fellowship with Christ. This Kingdom of the Master, this new Israel of God, this chosen people of His love was to be catholic (universal), as wide as the earth itself. And finally, as the Church went down through the ages, she was ever to be the same apostolic body to which the Master gave His everlasting commission of teaching and sanctification and spiritual jurisdiction: in their successors the Apostles were to live in her forever.

So, this is the Church of Christ, as Christ actually instituted it. This *is* His Church; for, it not only was, but it is in the world to-day. It must be. Otherwise, His promise, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,"[1] would have failed. And that can never be; because He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."[2]

Where, then, is it, this one true Church of Christ? Thank God! we know where it is and what it is. And would that all of our separated brethren would see it in the light of Christ and would come to the Mother who holds out longing arms to them in their wanderings! Where is it? Everywhere. What is it? The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church—the Roman Catholic Church.

We call it *Roman Catholic,* not in the sense that it exists only at Rome—for it is world-wide; not in the sense that there is another Catholic Church besides the Roman Catholic—for there is not: but as explaining

[1] L. c.
[2] Luke xxi, 33.

that Rome, by reason of the Apostolic See, is the center of the Church whose circumference embraces the world. It is by way of clearness of statement that we call the Church Roman Catholic, and not by way of limitation; for, each of Christ's own may say, "My name is Christian and my surname is Catholic." [1]

The Roman Catholic Church, and she alone, is the Church of Christ our Lord. This statement, scoffed at by indifferentists and flouted by all non-Catholic bodies, is not based on blind prejudice: it is grounded on solid fact. And this fact must be honestly considered with the eyes fixed steadily on the goal of truth.

To begin with, if we look for Peter, who by Christ's institution must live forever in the Church which the Master founded, we find him nowhere save in the Catholic Church; and the tradition of Christian ages, which grasped the truth of the Lord's institution, rightly proclaims that where Peter is, there and there only is the Church of Christ.

[1] St. Pacianus Ep. 1 ad Sympron., n. 4.

Then too, going on to the examination of the identifying marks which Christ stamped upon His handiwork, we find, first of all, that in the Roman Catholic communion all her children profess submission to the living voice of the one teaching power and to the one spiritual jurisdiction over all. All the faithful look to the body of the bishops and to their chief, the frail man who from Peter's throne teaches and rules the world. On the other hand, there is not—and let this be noted well—there is not on earth to-day any other church which dares to speak with the voice of ultimate and decisive authority in doctrinal matters. She alone is assured enough and brave enough to declare the truth of God to all the world in unmistakable terms. She is the living voice of authority left by the Master, who provided for the safeguard of His revelation no dead letter of a written word, though that word be sacred with the holiness of God's inspiration, but a voice which, through all the years, would sound absolute and infallible.

Besides, she alone has the special holiness

which marks her out as Christ's own. Of course, ordinary uprightness is found in her; but this is not all, nor is it enough, since it may be and is met with elsewhere too. The means of holiness are also hers; yet this is not all, nor is it enough, since some of these too may be found lopped off from their native tree. But besides all this and in addition to it, there exists in her, and in her alone, the marvel of hosts and legions of those whose lives spurn the things of earth for the higher holiness of loftier moral preeminence, with many and many an instance of heroic self-abnegation and devotedness to God and man, which bear the mark of heaven's approbation by well authenticated miracles. All this is found in her, and it is found not in isolated and sporadic cases, but with a continuity and a permanence which make it her own social good, which go beyond the power of mere nature or even of the ordinary assistance of grace, and which are the testimonial of God in her regard.

And, as for the other two signs of identity with Christ's glorious work, she and she

alone is spread over all lands and through all times, as the same teaching and sanctifying and ruling body founded upon the Apostles, to whom she alone can trace back her origin in an unbroken line of legitimate succession.

Thus, by the test of the primacy of Peter and his successors, as well as by the identifying "notes" or marks of Christ's institution, the Roman Catholic Church is manifested as the true Church of the Savior of mankind. Moreover, she is proved to be such by another marvel. For, as the Council of the Vatican so appositely and truthfully declares, the Catholic Church is herself a sign or standard set up among the nations and bears the stamp of God's handiwork, together with His miraculous approbation of her existence and of her rights. "By reason of her wonderful propagation" in the face of overwhelming obstacles, both from within and from without, "by reason of her surpassing holiness and her inexhaustible fecundity in all good works, by reason of her catholic unity and her unbroken stability, the Church herself is a great

and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefragable testimony of her own divine origin."[1] She stands before the world as the accredited ambassador of God, and her claim to be the true Church of the Master is ratified by the Supreme Lord of all.

She is the one, only Church of Christ; and all others that claim to come from Christ are counterfeits. For, the Master did not leave behind Him two or a dozen or a score or a hundred churches to do His work of love. One is His Church; and this one Church is necessary for salvation.

With the consciousness of her divine mission and of her unique position, the Church clasps her own to her motherly heart. But, at the same time, she holds forth her hands to those who have not yet come to her, and she says, as the Master said, "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[2] Yes, like the Christ, whose Spouse she is, she can say: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."[3] "Come to me." And the

[1] Denz. n. 1794.
[2] Matt. xi, 28.
[3] John xiv, 6.

answer of all the world should be the one which the Apostles made to the Lord when He asked them if they would go away from Him, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." [1]

To the disgust of the indifferentists who prate about one religion being as good as another, and to the bewildered anger of those who reject or scorn her, she says to them, as she says to all: "Come to me; for, I am the way fixed by the Master. And he who knowingly and willingly and through his own fault will live and die separated from my communion, shall have no hope here or hereafter." She says this, because she *must* be true to the mission, given her by Christ. And if because she says what Christ said—and He said just that—she meets with the scoffs of some and the hatred of others, she is suffering persecution for justice' sake and she shall have the reward promised by Jesus Christ.[2] It is not with bitter scorn, but with the yearning that springs from the depths of longing love,

[1] John vi, 69.
[2] Cf. Matt. v, 10.

that she speaks to those who are not as yet her own; and her words are not, "You are not of my fold: God help you!" but, "Be of my fold: God bless you!"

She knows, and she declares, that for such as have not yet seen the light of truth which wreathes her brow and the splendor of the glory which robes her as the Bride of Christ, there is still hope because of Christ's mercy for them in their guiltless ignorance. But, even then, her love makes her yearn for those separated ones and pity them in their misfortune.

For, misfortune it truly is. They may come at last to the Christ in heaven. They may even now be united with Him. Yet, at least comparatively speaking, they are in a most pitiable condition. They have, indeed, a few of the pearls of truth and holiness; whilst hers is the undivided treasure-house of God's beneficence. They are cheered by some faint, struggling and straggling beams of heavenly warmth; whilst her children are basking in the full splendor of the sun of justice. They are sustaining life with the crumbs which fall

from the Master's table; whilst her own are seated at the banquet feast of love.

Oh, that blessed, loving, and lovable Mother Church! Like the Christ, by whose side she stands,[1] she has won more love and endured more hatred than any mortal being. Persecutions unto blood from the great ones of this world and insidious assaults from those who called themselves her sons have attempted the black work of envy and pride and hatred. But the gates of hell have not prevailed against her. Yes, she has been loved and she has been hated. Yet, all through the sweetness of love and all through the bitterness of hate she has gone on doing her work for men because of God. Heaven with its eternal light and gladness will show Christ's own how much they owe to their Mother. But only the great Searcher of hearts can properly appreciate the spiritual blessings of holiness which she has brought to immortal souls.

Still, over and above these blessings, she has showered other gifts upon men, whilst she was doing her work through the cen-

[1] Cf. Ps. xliv, 10.

turies. She taught men the value of a human soul and she laid the foundations of a civilization which recognized the dignity of the individual. She saved the remnants of a perishing Roman culture and made it live in the lives of men, nobler than the noblest of pagan days.

When the wild barbarians rolled the red tide of invasion down from the North and swept everything away in a sea of blood, she tamed the fierce conquerors and made them her children: she taught them the arts of peace and shaped the beginnings of modern nations. She lifted her voice against the inhuman degradation of slavery, until she saw it disappear from most of the earth. By the glorious ideal which she put before men in the Crusades that strove to win back for Christendom the blessed tomb of the beloved Savior, she did away with many of the objectionable features of feudalism.

Nor is this the end of the catalogue of her benefactions to the world. She has uplifted the individual with the holiness which makes men worthy of their destiny, and she has guarded his rights against the

unjust encroachments of a deified State. She has consistently and bravely, even heroically, stood for the sanctity of marriage against all the evils which disrupt the home and drag down the sacredness of woman. She has been the true mainstay of the State, not only by thus guarding and lifting the individual and the family, but by standing for liberty against license, for authority against chaos, for permanence against ruin.

And for the future? She holds from the Christ the only satisfactory solution of the problems of these troublous times—the only means which will save society from destruction. In a word, as the life of the Founder of the Church was painted in the few but pregnant words, "He went about doing good,"[1] so too the deathless life of the Church may be told in the same brief utterance.

With the glories of the Church glowing radiantly before us, with the vision of her accomplishments through all the years elevating our souls, with the glimpse of the

[1] Acts x, 38.

future consummation heartening us, a consummation which will transform the mourning of the days of her sorrowful earthly pilgrimage into the ecstatic thrill of an everlasting celestial jubilee—with all this in view, surely we who are the children of the grand old Church need no exhortation to be proud of our glorious Mother.

We need offer no apology to the world for being Catholics; rather, we should prize this blessing above all dignities. We are the children of the Spouse of the Savior of the world. We are part of the mystic Christ. And should we bow our heads in shame and blush for ourselves or for our Mother? It is undoubtedly saddening to have even to refer to such a thing as shame for such a glory. One would say that such shame was impossible and unimaginable, did not wretched facts speak the disgrace of some weaklings who are ashamed of their faith and of their holy Mother Church.

Shame on *them!* The man who is ashamed of the mother who bore him and loved him and labored for him and suffered for him is no true man. And the man who

is ashamed of his Mother the Church is a living disgrace to the name of manhood; and he will meet his deserts later on. For, he who despises the Church despises the Christ.[1] How, then, can he dare to look for the depth of love-light in the eyes of Christ, the Judge, when he shall stand before Him?

Besides taking pride in our holy Mother, we should love her and we should defend her against unjust attacks. When blinded bigots impugn our loyalty to country because of our Catholicity, as they have done for years and as they are doing to-day; when they hurl against us their vile calumnies, black with the hatred of the father of lies; we might be judged indulgently for passing all this by in lofty disdain or in contemptuous silence—if the attack touched only ourselves. But, the attack is aimed against our Mother; and to pass that by unheeded may mean indifference or cowardice. So, let us be brave in her defense, in the spirit of Christian courtesy and Christian charity, but with the strength of Christian dignity

[1] Cf. Luke x, 16.

and the bravery of Christian love and Christian heroism.

At the same time, let us never forget that the best defense of our loved Mother is to be found in the clean, honest, faithful, self-sacrificing lives of her children. Many a man will fight for a cause; but will not live for that cause nor in accordance with its principles. Yet, such a one, whilst defending the object of his boasted love, inflicts a wound which goes down deeper than the shafts of deadly hatred. Many a man who would wish to bring his wandering fellows to the truth of God and of God's own Church has built an almost impassable barrier across the way that leads home; and he has built it by his own life, which is unworthy of his Mother, the Church; he has spread a thick veil of darkness, through which the rays of light can hardly fight their way. Let us beware of incurring such an awful responsibility; for, it is a heavy burden to bear.

On the contrary, let our lives match our prayer, which pleads that the light of the true faith may be accepted by all who have

not yet come to Mother Church. Let us remember, too, that to be within the pale of the Church's communion is necessary, but that it is not enough, unless the spirit of the Church vivifies our hearts and the streams of Christ's life-giving grace flow into our souls through the channels of His loving mercy. To be a dead limb upon the tree of life will avail little. Nay, it will avail nothing, until the sap of divine life revivifies the stricken member into a living part of the living whole.

God grant that men may come to God along the way which leads by the stages of faith and fear and hope and love and repentance, until they have crossed the borderland of salvation, as the Church lifts them up to God! God grant that these same holy dispositions, and especially the disposition of whole-hearted and loyal love, may work through all the actions of our own lives and make us worthy of the Church, who is the sacred Spouse of the Bridegroom Christ and our own dear blessed Mother!

Then will the world be better and purer and holier because we have lived; then, too,

the endless ages of eternity itself will not be too long for the Father of all love to reward His dear ones in the ineffable bliss of heaven.

The focus of God's thrilling love for men—a love, which some of His holy ones have dared to call "divine folly"—is the blood-stained rood that bears the gory body of the God-man who died for us. On Calvary Christ won the right to lead men home to salvation along the road where He placed the Milestones on the Way to Life. On Calvary, to use the expression of some of the Fathers of the Church, He fashioned His Church in that stream of blood and water which flowed from His sacred riven side.

Yes, there and then He paid to divine justice the price demanded for sanctifying grace, which, as true life, was to save His dear enemies, His hated loved ones. There and then He won the graces which He was to bestow upon mankind through all days even to the consummation of the world—the holiness of faith and fear and hope and repentance and hallowed love. There and then He

conquered the right to the absolute devotedness of His "little children,"[1] whom He committed to His One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. And at the thought of what those benefits mean to us and to all men; at the memory of the love which made Him our Victim and our Priest; may our souls, from their very depths, voice the prayer, that His precious blood may profit those for whom it was shed; that those who are not of the fold may come into His Church and that there may be but "one fold and one shepherd";[2] that to us who are within the embrace of the Church's motherly arms may be granted the added gift of loyal fidelity "now and at the hour of our death!"[3]

[1] John xiii, 33.
[2] John x, 16.
[3] The Hail Mary.

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